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ME!



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A BIG HORSE TO RIDE



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK - BOSTON - CHECAGO
SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED LONDON - BOMBAY - CALCUTTA MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, Ltd.



A BIG HORSE TO RIDE

BY

E. B. DEWING

AUTHOR OF "OTHER PEOPLE'S HOUSES"

New Morik THE MACMILLAN COMPANY 1911

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Set up and electrotyped. Published June, 1911.

Meriused Press
J. S. Cushing Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

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... Those heavy wings spread high
So sure of flight, which do not fly;
That set gaze never on the sky;
Those scriptured flanks it cannot see;
Its crown, a brow-contracting load;
Its planted feet which trust the sod: . . .
(So grew the image as I trod:)
O Nineveh, was this thy God, —
Thine also, mighty Nineveh?
— Rossetti, The Burden of Nineveh.



BOOK I VITA NOVA



A BIG HORSE TO RIDE

BOOK I

I. OF PREFACES AND CREEDS

As I sit here at my desk in the big bow window of my library, I look at the task I've given myself probably for the last time coldly. Later, when the passion of work grips me, under its stress my faculty of criticism will give way, I shall become too much one with my task to look at it at all. But now I see it in its folly—its predestined failure. I see it as some legal executor on the keen scent for value, who, hunting about among the effects,—the stage properties,—the crowns and wigs and autographs,—comes upon an awkward package, and thinking to unearth the letters of some forgotten love affair finds instead a novice's attempt at a difficult art. I fancy this legal executor giving his find but a cursory glance, and then bundling it in with a brocade of doubtful antiquity and a scrapbook of early press notices.

There's the pessimistic view of the thing, the view of the searcher whose expectant smacking lips are left unfed, and also my own healthy professional contempt — I know as a dancer with what a pain of humbleness and study one should approach any art. But I'm nevertheless inclined to hope. I shall be honest, I shall endeavor to present things as they

are and as they were. I shall be honest about my motives, my impressions, my opinions — even my opinion of myself, which may be considered over-excellent, all things considered. Yet it isn't an autobiography which I'm going to write. will be that only by the way; autobiography is the history of one's own life, and I find life more general than that—we've all taken our plunge into the maelstrom. I have, I think, a peculiarly sharp sense of life; I see it vivid, iridescent, lacking in the usual saving haze of atmosphere — as clear as an Italian sky, and there are times when my sense of it is almost too sharp for pleasure. There are moments at sea, times when the moonlight lies white on a white road, the sudden aspect of a sunny crowded street, and that instant — caught and held in memory — of the first pressure of a hand that you afterwards love. There's the nightly tuning of the orchestra, which sounds from my dressing-room like the animated talk of giant insects; and later the effect of still shadowed blackness across the footlights, a blackness and stillness filled with people who are swayed even as I myself am swayed — I feel myself merely the more skilled expression of their own impulses.

And I come to these high moments of life with a recurrent freshness. It's the artist's eternal joie de vivre, the imaginative faculty which makes the last kiss as real as the first and the break of the last wave as sudden and as surprising as that of the wave which has gone before. It's something of this freshness I wish to get at. . . . I find I have a creative instinct, my dancing doesn't satisfy; I've come to the place every artist arrives at, I suppose, when he wonders disloyally if the needs of his own talent might not have been better met elsewhere, and pays shy court to a new muse. In

writing it's the tangibility of the thing which tempts me; the labor of it shows for more than a trodden floor and a torn drapery, there's the thought held solid in the ink.

My friend and housemate, Mrs. Cassagryer, — she who is known to an avidious reading public as Calumet Tarr, thinks it hardly meet for me to waste my time and my precious freshness upon an endeavor so outside my own line. "Or if you must write," she says, "try fiction!" She sees it as a criminal literary unthrift, a squandering of material. My plan seems to her either not at all worth while or else lacking in modesty, unduly intimate, brazen. But I ask her if modesty is to be expected of a dancer — a woman who nightly kicks over the heads of a gaping multitude? I ask her, also, if she doesn't find it curious that my invasion of her chosen field has given me more a sense of modesty's lack than ever I had in the purely physical nudity of tights and chiffons? As I sit here quietly, my pen in my hand, I feel in an extraordinary state of undress — as though I were introducing to a terrible intimacy a whole roomful of strangers. That's just it — the thought held solid in the ink — there's no escape. This false delicacy will disappear, I shall indulge at last in feats of soul-exposure; but at present I confess to thinking Mrs. Cassagryer more habitually brazen than I. She takes the most intimate confidences of life and sends them forth clad in the scant cloak of story, excusing her ruthlessness on the ground that though their garments may be scant their faces are masked. She changes magically; it is, I'm sure, sometimes only subconsciously that she herself recognizes the source of her inspiration.

Though again this source is clear enough. The angle of a strange girl's hat — she has found it psychic and freighted

with meaning — a young man's innocent enthusiasm about his fiancée's mother — this rare phase proved to her invaluable. She has, more than any one I've ever known, the creative mind. She thinks of a thing, and as she thinks it becomes clear. As I see it, her process of thought must be like a waitress's lighting of the candles on a dinner table; she applies the match of her fixed attention — illumination follows. She tries to explain it to me. The whirr of my motor at the door brings her down from her sanctum at the top of our house, and she sits with me during my late supper and smokes and talks. And I feel that this rather feckless attempt of mine is largely a result of these talks. She imbues her subject — the whys and the wherefores with the same fatal interest which makes her sell so outrageously; she forces me to try it out. I put the responsibility for my Big Horse quite upon Mrs. Cassagryer. Her disapprovals, her objections, are a locking of the stable door after the animal has gone.

For in spite of my modesty I feel that I may ride him far. . . . If I could take my twenty-seven years, with their memories and impressions and motives, and thread them like beads upon a string—if I could use as this string my aforesaid sharp sense of life — and then the clasp that fastens the whole together might be the result, the sum of it all, the meaning. But at twenty-seven one doesn't get to that. There is no clasp. It's an unanswered question. But I shall do my best.

I shall tell how at the age of eight I was held in a state of the most abject subjection by a child of seven who had a will stronger than mine; how under this dominion I attempted — and for a time thought I had compassed — a murder, and had all the reactive horror of it. I shall tell of my mother and father, my long summers at Barrington, my first acquaintance with my chosen profession. I shall speak of love quite frankly; if I can sufficiently conquer my sense of brazenness, I shall have a good deal to say about love from first to last; I have about it theories and ideas. . . .

I've seen it in the high moments of its reality and the still higher moments of its illusion. I've seen it when the reality and the illusion came all together and then crumbled to a bitter dust in the mouth. I've known the glory of beauty and of an individual ugliness that made beauty seem inglorious and trite. I've felt the pull of light loves that lasted for the lilt of an Irish tune, that began and ended in a meeting of eyes and a clinking of wine glasses. And I've found these loves to be as real as the more enduring passion. At best one loves only at moments. I remember once a late summer's day of them made magic by the completing enchantment. I had climbed a tower and stood looking out over bays and lands and skies; love colored the air, and it was an emotion as vivid as ever I've had, but I remember it with the curious exception of not remembering the man who caused it. He was there, standing beside me, looking out; he wore a coat of a light tweed; but I recall better the salt winds blowing in from the sea and the flashing sprayspattering arm of a swimmer near the shore. Love, I think, is something within ourselves. Sex — Simon Featherly says it's a fact of the mind. There are moments when I love the whole world, when the voice of it — even the little part which comes clapping across the footlights — is dearer to me than the deepest bass that ever woman thrilled to.

On this subject — perhaps the biggest in all of life — I

seem to have waxed voluble; but there are others with which I shall deal. Religion, for instance, is an inquiry which interests me increasingly. The religion of other people I regard as I regard everything else, with a very deep curiosity - almost envy; my own I divide into two parts - a kind of morality of intellect which I honestly endeavor to preserve, and a rare primitive emotion of reverence, a vague realization of the Infinite, come to me in the waste spaces of the sea and at early morning and once or twice in churches. think this reverence is part of my feeling — my sharpness — for life; I carry it on to a feeling and a sharpness for eternal life — why not? And it seems to me that the sea and the glory of the dawn and the lights of an altar are hardly more lasting than the reflected lights in a spangled dress or the slam of a carriage door in a quiet street. Things can't die — tangible, physical things, I mean. The slamming door echoes on into eternity and the spangled dress, by virtue of its one-time existence, always exists. I'm clumsy, I can't put it clearer than that. It's as if the whole universe were a sort of vast substance of life, in which all the separate parts that go to make it up are found, and out of which they come forth, and to which they return and come forth again; and as if this embryonic vastness were informed with a Universal Energy that pious people call God.

I think this God must be a moral force, in spite of all the horrors and mistakes. Because, otherwise, the whole business would disintegrate. An immoral force is always a destructive force—it's the great argument against immorality, also the final proof of it. I've known of forces which would be thought, from a casual glance, to be very immoral indeed quite saved by not being destructive at all.

OF PREFACES AND CREEDS

One might be able to construct — there are muds, which baked, do the work of clay. It's all in keeping clear the point of view, in preserving the morality of intellect. Sin leaving the sinner unscathed — therefore not sin — it's an argument stated before. But if it were so men would be better than women, which they're obviously not. For men have a happy capacity for discarding the unessential; they could come to you with blood upon their hands and yet with an innocence of heart; while women are more plastic, more molded by the passing show, their center of gravity is more easily swung awry. Take Valentine Seymour.

Take her center of gravity — but perhaps one couldn't. If in these pages I'm able to shed upon it some light, my labors will have an added excuse for being. It isn't so much she herself that matters, with her wonderful grace and her wonderful lack of other more economic qualities, as it is the type she represents. Sometimes I see her as an individual, a beautiful woman, fair-skinned and slim; but more often it is as the perfection of her type, her glorious head bent low with the weight of its universal falseness. I see her so — with no feeling of enmity at all — merely artistically grateful for completeness. I see her as an exquisite passive stem lending herself always to the grafting and growing of foreign blooms. The measure of her falseness is the measure of her passivity, the measure — also — of her disintegration.

There's Simon Featherly, the husband I have attained and discarded. He has a point of view — a whole philosophy of life — which he's shielded from the faintest disintegrating breath. He has a system of balances so fine that on the wrong side a feather would weigh. His sins, even, have

always been cold, calculated, so moderate that they barely rank as that; excess is for him anathema. The only excess he ever knew, I think, was one of hard intellectual curiosity. And yet, with all this care, there's been a general thickening of his moral fiber, gradual enough no doubt, and I've only known him at the end of it. But as I've seen by a boyish photograph, where the mouth was less hard and the back of the head and neck less bull-like, that he hasn't always been so extraordinarily solid, so I've suspected him by less direct a vision of other subtler changes — changes of spirit as well as flesh. It makes me wonder about myself. . . . I'm like Simon in being rather firmly set; it would take a great deal of disintegration to displace me utterly—and yet we can't count too much on that — change works — though we go on unconscious, waking only at last to the irretrievable result.

I've endeavored to make a rough outline of what I'm going to do — the problems I shall bring up. I've collected them all — love, religion, the art of Mrs. Cassagryer, morality, my own feeling for life and other things besides — and collected thus they somehow do not invite further inquiry. My Big Horse bids fair to be slow going at best and at worst held back by philosophical asides in the manner of 1830; but I ask of my audience a moment's patience, a moment's faith. I shall soon begin and tell what story I have to tell as straight as I can and with as much verisimilitude as lies in my power. I ask if it wouldn't seem the merest sophistry, any philosophical wandering in which a dancer might indulge? Being a dancer precludes being so much else; it's the sort of fact which has in itself a tremendous inhibitory force. And with me it happens to be

the great central fact which makes all others important only in their relation to it. Nothing else matters in the least.

For this peculiar genius which is mine, and my indubitable belief in it, has taken the place with me of Christian faith. It's been to me at once a baptism and a confirmation; kept me exquisitely fit in body and fairly fit in mind, saved me from as many sins as it has from potatoes and bonbons. I have little sympathy for the artist who comes to his art wide-eyed and wan from other struggles, who neglects his instrument, lets his ink clot, and his paint dry. And a dancer — she usually has paint enough, but lacks the rest; she uses herself, plays upon herself, writes her story in the grace and movement of her own body. It's the only instrument she has, the only voice, her precious trust — and that injured she would be dumb. It takes at last an abnormal insistence. She comes to regard her body a little as if it were not very intimately hers — speaking for myself, I've quite lost the personal sense of it. It's a fortunate gift to my genius — I owe it to my genius to treat it with respect.

It's hardly a pride of the flesh that I have; my pride is rather for the long ripple and flow of trained muscles, the line of the shoulder, the ankle strongly set, and the knee straight like a runner's. I should be very much ashamed if my muscles turned to fat and my shoulders rounded and the line of my throat and chin sagged; and there are those who would be very much ashamed to think so much about it—to regard this possibility with so frank a horror. They look upon the healthy human body as rather beyond the pale, but questionably decent; though the body touched by the purifying hand of illness is a different matter altogether. It's a view which doesn't at all agree with my theory of im-

morality and disintegration. Illness is decay, and why decay should make for virtue. . . .

This physical side is a side with which I'm afraid I shall always be rather closely concerned. It's a problem peculiarly mine. I live in a world of physical excitations, my whole training — my whole development — has been toward that. My physical being has become quite painfully responsive, trained as it is to the tangled complications of the dance. The path from mind to body has grown very short. Sometimes it seems as if there were no path, no mind, as if I were sentient without mind — which is absurd. It seems as if I were borne along on an interminable wave of sound and light and movement. Sleeping I hear the blare of the orchestra and the clicking of castanets. It seems that the ideal existence would be as a clear intellectual consciousness.

I think of my finer cells of brain and nerve as prostituted to base physical uses. It's as if my mind were in the hire of my body and overtasked in its service. Yet — in greater or less degree — it is always our bodies which complete our intellects, our physical needs which link us with the rest of our kind, and it's the very link by which our intellects are held in any sort of leash. Mind alone would be altogether chaotic. Could one be possessed only of a mind and yet be able to smell the smell of newly mown grass or feel the warmth of the spring sun or drink a cup of tea before the fire on a winter's afternoon? And then come hearing and sight, the politer, the least animal of the senses, the most godlike. But I can't conceive of seeing without eyes and hearing without ears. Would it be possible for an intellectual consciousness to have a sort of inner vision, an

inner cognizance of sound? My imagination widens at the thought of this consciousness reaching out into the world of sense with incorporeal fingers. It's been so much with my actual senses that I myself have done these things. Yet there might be a different sort of sense altogether. . . .

I've talked of moralities. I've separated the mental from the emotional. But first we have the senses, every appeal comes first through their gates and sometimes never reaches farther. The appeal of my dancing, for instance it might for many never get beyond sight. One comes to think that all these gates open merely upon variously cultivated appreciations which are in themselves an end. One forgets that beyond all that there is a little divine spark — a glimmer of something — shy as a rare moth. It has nothing to do with gates, and yet it's only in its ultimate service that they exist. I hope to learn more of it before the Universal Energy sees fit to pick me up - snip me off as a barber snips an unnecessary hair — and to put me back into the vast confused substance of life out of which I came, and out of which I shall come again, perhaps quite changed. I don't know. I feel it's for me to go on instead of back. I may have a body still more worthy of the genius I feel I mustn't lose. It may, as I said of sense, be a different sort of thing altogether. . . .

II. PARENTS

IT will be harder than I had thought. I find myself at the very outset of my task surrounded by purely technical difficulties of which I knew not the existence. My respect for Mrs. Cassagryer increases. I'd thought her chosen calling indolent, — certainly it presents no such problems as the saut à pieds joints, — but now it seems to me anything but indolent. If I go to the door and listen upward I can discern the steady burr and click of her stenographer's typewriter; spread beside it I figure the closely written sheets of my friend's latest triumph. My respect, as I say, grows. Of course she has time while I have very little; the theater claims me, literature is her vocation. I see that there'll be whole days when I shan't so much as open the drawer of my desk, and days when I shall have not much more than got it open — taken out its growing contents — when I shall be called away in the middle of a word. This is a season when rehearsals loom. But given time — given all the time there is — I might sit here for hours in a perfect glory of leisure and come to no nearer decision about the conduct of this book. A petal from the roses in the vase at my elbow might fall and be blown across my page, — it would occur to me to stop and describe that; my cat Cerberus, he for whom I have arranged a cushioned pedestal by my hall door and wait for my friends to appreciate the jest,—he would claim me with a rake of his paw. Fortunately now he is arranging his toilet and pretending to ignore me.

His splendid fur is blue in the sunlight and mottled in its sheen. His eyes are narrowed to amber slits.

I live intensely in the present. The past I remember as a series of impressions, sometimes so clear that they make part of the present, and sometimes my memory plays me tricks and I forget utterly. I remember this and that. At my desk I remember better — much I thought dead comes alive. It's a general clearing like the brighter light in a room when the shades are raised in the morning. But this illumination unfortunately has its effect upon the present also. There are things which clamor to be said, of to-day and yesterday and the day before that, and which seem to be more vivid — more urgent — than the coherent history of my early childhood. Last night Simon Featherly was at the theater conspicuously in a box — that was vivid enough — I danced at him and round him, all for the pleasure of his queer brilliant eyes. . . . Why, when a husband and wife are through with one another, can't they leave one another alone?

I think the new dance I'm taking to London in May is going to be very fine, with its accompaniment of mandolins and guitars and an unseen voice. I must get my singer to master my conception of the song as something thin and sharp—a mere wailing thread of sound.

I've been thinking over what I could honestly set down as my very first remembrance, and I should say it was the blue and white patterned paper of my nursery wall. I close my eyes and see it now, and the high, large window overlooking a wide flat land of roofs. There were chimneys, too, like the cut stumps of trees, and to one of these a weathercock was fastened which constantly shook with the wind.

I remember being lifted down from the enormous seat of a white-painted rocking-chair and led into the parlor, where some ladies and gentlemen were drinking tea out of little flowered cups. I remember a great red-bearded face, which must have been my father's, bending close to me, and being picked up high in the air by strong hands. A certain sort of rapid talk and laughter always brings this scene back to me; it was probably the tone taken by the tea-drinking company. My mother must have been there, but I have no recollection of her till what was a considerably later date; I was of more independent age and it comes back to me in greater detail.

She was sitting at breakfast. She wore a blue morning gown trimmed with lace and her heavy hair was twisted loosely on her neck. My father stood looking down at her, his thumbs thrust into the armholes of his waistcoat. I think I had, even then, a vague sense of the disaster between them. It had struck me full as I had whisked in and brought me to my chair at slackened pace; my presence I felt was an interruption; I wished to leave but the wish was too unformulated for me to take a retreating step. My father did so; he turned upon his heel abruptly, with a last word that comes back to me now merely in its bitterness of intent. One sometimes in like manner gathers the general meaning of a foreign tongue.

My eccentricities, such as they are, even my choice of a profession, have been attributed by kind friends to my early lack of what are known as home influences. I had more home influences than fall to the common lot, — I fairly bristled with them; I had at home the influences which are usually brought in from the outside. To me my

home was an absorbingly interesting place, not altogether agreeable, surely not a haven of rest, but full of surprises and adventures — one lived at the edge of expectancy. It might be better said, then, that I owe my eccentricities — simple and few as they are — rather to the fullness of my home influences. I wonder at my not being queerer than I am, that my peculiarities are so largely a matter of imagination rather than of fact. All my childhood was filled with a discordant stir.

If my mother didn't get on with my father, it didn't follow that she didn't get on with the rest of the world. circle of friends was as large as it was gay, and she dominated it with an energetic restlessness. She moved in it and graced it lightly as a craft built to sail troubled waters. I remember her one day, coming down the steps of our house, her fur cape voluminous and her hat with a feather set to the breeze. She was part of the shifting brightness of the winter morning, part of the brightness and stir of the street, with its convulsive rattle of traffic and its half-swept snow and its swirling eddies of dust. It was a street that ran from Fifth to Sixth Avenue in the lower residential part of town; beginning at Fifth with spacious fronts and wide high stoops, toward the middle the houses became narrower, and finally ended in a squalor that yet wasn't poverty, a shabby apartment house bursting unkempt children, and on the corner, frankly, a saloon. My mother was like that, she had within herself all the possibilities. She could be as dignified and splendid as a queen, and then would come a stir — a shifting — and something would light in her face like the thing I've seen in faces on street corners at night.

It isn't a pretty comparison to make about one's mother,

but it's the only comparison that brings clear the thing I mean. A sort of a wildness she had — a gleam and glimmer — which was yet a wildness of cities and a glimmer of lights. With the pervasive oriental scent she used, the jangling trinkets at her belt, the flashing laugh that showed her teeth, she had the effect of touching all the senses at once. Her presence was confusing, and as much an emblem of hazard as the piratical Black Jack and scarlet knotted kerchief. She had in her blood this tinge of the harlot, come down to her, perhaps, from some remote erring ancestress, and waking now and spreading like a thin fire. In imagination at least we most of us have it; it's the sordidness of the reality that saves us. I may be outside the range of dictionary definitions, but the thing I mean is the thing in us opposed to certainty. It's the adventurous view of life, the view by which we feel the romance of a stretch of dusty road or a ship's pathway over eastern seas. And women, in adventure, are hemmed in by convention; there is only a certain sort of adventure with which women are ever supposed to be concerned. And the reality of that brings us but a cut above the woman on the street corner, and her appreciation of adventure must have long ago come stale. A reality insecure against horror. . . .

This New York of the eighties, the very early nineties, in which to my childish eyes my mother appeared such an ascendant figure, was a place quite different from the New York I know now. It's widened since then and grown. Even here, where I live in Washington Square in the house left me by my grandmother, the change has worked. It's a great city now, almost the greatest, filled with the climbing thought of millions, and loud with a human note all its own.

It's new and fine and old and bad all in one; it has a past, a present, and most of all a future, and they come together. Twenty years ago it breathed a closer air. It was very much a city even then — more, perhaps, distinctively city than now — for now there's a wide sweep about it like the wide sweep of the country, and then it was narrowed and barred in. Perhaps then it was my childish inability to see it whole. My eyes were blinded by the nearness of the pavement, my ears stopped by the rattle of the busses on Fifth Avenue. It was like a dream in which there's a great web of tangles, and you try to clear them, and just at the edge of success you wake up. I remember it like that, and through it all the troubling sense of my mother's dominance.

I didn't love her. She never did anything to make me love her. She gave me, when it pleased her, her very close companionship — I had with her at times a peculiarly equal relation — and when it pleased her she neglected me. Once she threw a book at me; I carry the mark of it above my left temple. All of which doesn't prove that I mightn't still have adored her; I don't defend myself, a child should instinctively cuddle to its mother's arms; but I wasn't made like that. The fault might have lain with us both. My mother pleased my æsthetic sense, and otherwise what appealed to me most in her was the queer shifting of her eyes. I used to watch them and under my scrutiny they would move like the weathercock outside my nursery window. She had very moist lips I hated being kissed by.

I lived in an atmosphere of surprise. There was a constant arrival and departure, bags packed and unpacked, cabs called at the eleventh hour, trains to be caught, appointments kept. It was in the days before the telephone was

in as general use as it is now and our hall bench was always occupied by one or more member of the District Messenger Service, usually with the hunched disconsolate shoulders of long waiting. Even now the yellow envelope of a telegram brings me back sharply, and telegrams are the daily common-places of my calling. But I still associate them less with the stir of my present life than I do with the stir of my childhood — the tenseness, the pealing doorbells, the agitations and emotions. Telegrams mean nothing now,—mere commercial conveniences; then they were words hurled miraculously through space and fraught with strange meanings.

Sometimes the meanings were intentionally strange. I remember once my father's intercepting one of this last sort and reading it out to my mother who had appeared suddenly on the stair landing above: "'Roddy has the measles'—It seems to me he's always having 'em. He had 'em on Wednesday and on the Friday before that — who's Roddy?" I never learned, for my mother seized the thing and tore the yellow paper roughly across.

My world was full of things like that, things half seen and understood. But I grew to understand. The sharp bitter taunts, the challenges and vilifications, ceased to be for me in a foreign tongue. I don't know when it was I stumbled upon the discovery that my parents really cared about each other. It wasn't caring in the accepted domestic sense, but they were disturbed by each other's presence; even in a crowded room the one would have been aware of the other's entrance; it was a very positive feeling which they had, part antipathy and part what I should now place close to passion. They felt it, whatever it was, up to the last. . . .

All my ideas of sex and love, the relations of men and women, have as a background and a beginning the relations — in so far as I saw and understood — of my father and mother. There was much, of course, which must have escaped me utterly and much my memory has stored and held for me to see when I could; but they gave me my initial presentation of the great problem. It's as if they were the first man and the first woman and I a single, strange, little feminine substitute for Cain and Abel. My father fired my imagination, I hailed him even then as one of the big men, the big horses; my mother I wasn't so sure about, I see now I was harsh. I judged both my parents, not as a mature person judges, in the soft yet clarifying light of personal experience, but standing apart coldly and abstractly. In place of unquestioning affection I gave them my absorbed attention; my judgment, I say, was abstract enough, but I wonder that they didn't burn and tremble under the intensity of my regard.

There entered at last into our already storm-shaken abode the clanging ominous word, divorce. The very walls rang with it. My walls seem destined so to ring. There are people who are happily married, I've known of cases — Mrs. Cassagryer was separated from her husband only by his death — but in my world that sort of happiness has been rare, most of the cases I've known best haven't been of that sort. Divorce is a word which has always been my rather intimate concern — in the future it still looms for me — and that I should have begun with it so young is only part of the way in which I've begun with everything young. I was never hemmed in by the narrow bounds of the nursery — bounds have always, in fact, been of my own making. But I have

a theory about that — I think it's been the saving of me. The disquiet in me, which might, if left, become ungovernable, has been constantly swept up. Much that many people must seek out — excitements, clatters, uncertainties — have been mine by right; as I say, I've had at home the influences which many people have to seek. And in these latter years my profession in itself continues my early provision of disquiet. There are times when even the driving devil that inhabits me asks for quarter — but that is as it should be — and if there are yet other times when he still waxes fat, rises from his tasks a giant refreshed, why, I do what I can. It seems then as though the longest road, and the deepest, widest seas, and the biggest horse, were not enough.

My mother was, as I say, a woman of many possibilities. My father was an engineer — for that matter he still is one. And I often think how part of his irresponsibility, his occasional almost crazed recklessness, is due to his constant contact with great machines, powers abnormally tremendous. He is familiar with speeds and heights, he thinks in miles and tons when other men think in inches and pounds, and he brings to the life he has apart from that this over-His mind is adjusted to immensities and it grown sense. measures immensities with beautiful precision. In his profession he's the sort of man who is sent for to surmount difficulties and solve problems where other lesser men have failed. Of late years he's been working out West because he likes it there, giving his whole attention to the state of Colorado—burrowing into mountains, netting gulches with trestles — but he still is best known for having taken a prominent part in the cutting of the New Channel and the building of the New Sea Wall. William Rhodes Carson, his name is. I used to fancy him in oilskins and boots cutting and building with his own hands and arising Neptune-like from the waters; it was one of my bitterest childish disappointments to discover him during the very height of these enterprises sitting dryly at a desk, surrounded by blueprints, and dressed in ordinary tweeds.

But I have never quite blurred the Neptune-like vision of him. He was Neptune; and standing in the doorway of my nursery, his hands raised to the frame, he was Atlas; and when his red beard caught the sun he was Jove. He was any one sufficiently big and bearded and mythical. had a book called "Heroes of Old," adorned with many much-colored representations for which he must have posed. His likeness to Jove gave rise to a quite sacrilegious confusion — Jove, the father of the gods — God, the Father - my father. He built bridges and waterways and once a railroad cut through solid rock. There was a journey to the mountains, taken in the company of my mother, and a sudden dive into a blackness, which she explained by calling my When we emerged into the light again father's tunnel. I remember pressing my face against the glass of the car window in an effort to look back, half expecting to see him as an inhabiting cavern spirit. There was surely something superhuman in a man who could transform the face of nature, span rivers, and harness the sea.

Once I saw him drunk, a flaming giant. I remember the backward angle of his silk hat and the cigar in his mouth and the broad shirt-front that had across its white expanse an irregular pinkish stain. He was like an operatic King Charles cavalier then, and one expected from him a rich baritone drinking song. Instead, he talked in a loud un-

natural voice, and demanded of a sleepy yet frightened maid the whereabouts of my mother. The maid didn't know. I put in my small oar and added my ignorance to hers. I had waked with a sense of impending trouble and had come pattering out in obedience to an instinct I always had for the center of conflict. I was told to go back to bed. I stood there, stolid. The maid and my father became involved in a long disconnected parley. His tones thickened to incoherence and then rose high and shrieking, his words ran danger of colliding one with the other. "Then all I say is—'n' all I say—say's—" After that comes my first held recollection of hearing anybody swear—a recollection which ends sharply in the shutting of a door.

It will be seen that both my parents had the gift of vivid-Their blood must have been richer and redder than other people's — "BIGGER — BRIGHTER — BETTER — " I quote from the best known of the posters for "Aladdin's Palanquin." But I don't think they were better, so perhaps the quotation is inept. However that may be, I know they made every one else go small. I'm afraid I haven't got it clear, what an exceptional ancestry they were. They were violent people, both; and I feel myself to be the fine hard directed essence of that violence. Whatever I have of genius, of vitality, I owe to them, and if they've given me with it the chance of attributes not so good, it's a debt well worth the paying. My father was always big and splendid, whatever else he was, and I've come to think that half the things my mother said about him weren't true. As for her, I'm afraid that I myself have said too much, been too frank; to speak ill of her now is in as bad taste as

to speak ill of the dead. If I give the impression that she wasn't all she should be, I'm wrong, she was more than she should be — much more. I feel now as though something might have been done — and now I suppose it's too late. I haven't seen her for fourteen years, the courts gave me to my father, she emerged from the trial blackened and in shreds. I shall never forget the extraordinary day of the granting of my father's divorce.

I came back from school to find him lunching at home, and he told me. He told me, also, that my mother was coming to say good-by to me — once for all. I had to miss a dancing lesson in consequence. She came and took me about with her in a cab while she did some necessary shopping, and we talked of unimportant matters. She had no more sense of parting than I, and for myself I felt the lack. being miserably unequal to a rather fine situation; it would have saved my pride immensely to have wrung out a tear. If I had been overwhelmed by the unutterable, confused by a consciousness of depths I decently covered by my talk, I might have found excuse; but the thing was, I wasn't. Neither I nor she. We neither of us had anything to say, no more than we ever had had. She told me that I should have to keep house, and when she finally dropped me at my door — my door, then, not hers — she assured me that I should be very well off, she'd never have that worry to keep her awake o' nights. My money, the money my grandmother had left me, was so arranged that my father couldn't touch it.

"He couldn't so much as put his thumb on it —"

It was the last I ever heard of her implied wifely compliments.

I ran up the steps a trifle unsteady with the force of my relief. It was over. My relief was very clear, and as the months went by I realized more and more how completely over it was. The day of the granting of my father's divorce marks for me the end of a period. It marks an intrinsic and definite division. I ran up the steps of my father's house and the door opened into a new world. It was a world as new as the one — bursting newspapers—into which I awoke after I had justified before it my own faith in my power to dance; a world as new as that — newer, I think — than that in which I found myself on the day of my marriage. My unsteadiness was transmuted to a wonderful peace — a peace as blank as the plain gold frame of a picture or the curtain before it rises to disclose the stage. I lived in a Sabbath calm, moving softly, as though in the late presence of death. I think in certain of the rooms the shades were drawn. There was a kind of arrested action, the same thing — held and kept — which is momentarily present when a hearse goes by through noonday sun. And there was never any mention of her who had brought me into the world; it was tried to make it seem as if she had never been. It seemed, instead, like a houseful of ghosts.

And I still have, like a ghost to stir my memory of her, the vivid vision of her face staring out at me from behind the upper glass of the cab door. To kiss me she had raised a much-dotted veil, and it cut across heavily above her mouth. In spite of her stillness she gave her old effect of violence—uncontrol. The shifting eyes seemed to be loose in their sockets; the ill-tempered, sensuous mouth was loose also and might, one momentarily felt, encroach upon the handsome face even more than it already did. The pressure

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which holds matter compact seemed on the verge of disintegration. Yet with it all my mother was beautiful, and after all it's that I most remember — the sharp fine outline of her cheek, the broad smooth brow, and the heavy hair coiled low.

III. WORK

On this occasion, of which I've talked so much, when my mother left me and drove away in the cab, I was thirteen years old. I discover it with a helpless horror. I've brought my narrative up to that point and I've managed to leave out most of the things I've had to say — I've dealt with only one aspect of my childhood. But it seemed to me fitting that my parents should come first, and in my enthusiasm I've carried them right through. I've emphasized them and not emphasized enough the aspects of my childhood which were apart from them. I've made it out that my whole sky was shadowed by the great flapping wings of discord, while in reality this wasn't so. Even then I had my own life, my activities and thoughts, and the fullness of my home influences were only a frame and a setting.

My father and mother were occupied with their affairs no more than I was occupied with mine. I came and went almost as they did; I was always accompanied by Katie—that most redoubtable of Irishwomen—yet my freedom was extraordinary. But I was busy with the study of dancing, which occupation saved me from making of it worse uses. I learned what discouragement was and hope; I knew what it was to work and work and then suddenly go stale and not be able to do the thing at all. I knew—but I'll come back to that. I always come back to my dancing; it's been the one thing that's held me. My life has been all in little

pieces and through it all I've danced. I sometimes think it's the only reality there is — the only fact — and that everything else — love, faith, adventure, hope and charity — are but part of it, or else a delusion. I go forth to these things and they're vivid and compelling enough for a time, but I come back to my dance as to something solid and splendid and tangible.

I think of those years when I came and went with Katie—giving my share to the general activity in these directions—as years of effort, my energies were all bent hard. I went to school in the morning and to Makaroff in the afternoon, and whenever I could I sat at the light feet of the few dancers who in those days visited our shores. I remember Carmencita and Loie Fulle; Loie Fuller, a great flaming moth set in blackness, and Carmencita, who always brought before me the vision of a bull-fighting arena—a thing I never had seen in the flesh. I learned from them both—I learned from everything, everybody.

There was the afternoon which began it all. Some one had sent my mother tickets to a fête or festival, an entertainment in behalf of Christmas charity, and she took me with her. There was a man who wore eyeglasses at the end of a wide black ribbon who laughed when she introduced me to him as her chaperon. "So it's all right —?" I remember his saying.

"Quite all right," said my mother.

But what I remember most is the rhythmic glittering mass that filled the stage. It struck at me full; for me the world began; it was for me like a conversion to creed or the first realization of a great love. It was as if I had waited for it through eternity, as if at last I met it with a greeting

mot that I've tried. The theater might have burned down about me, and if the flame had kept free of the magic spectacle I shouldn't have known or cared. Nothing else mattered. There were long lines that swayed and folded and stretched out again; they rippled with a flux like the ripple of water that gathers impetus to break in a wave. There was a flowing of vari-colored draperies taught by the motion of women's figures, which in turn were taught and held by the rhythm — the beat and swing — of the orchestral bâton.

The music rose, sounding high and clear. There came a blare of horns and the great Savalieri made her way through to the front. It was plain how all the rest — the long swaying lines of color—were prelude. I watched, and as I watched I was held by an appalling belief. The belief was in myself — that some day I should dance, and dance better than that, better than the great Savalieri. I turned to my mother and told her. She was talking to the man with the ribboned eyeglasses, and didn't hear. And of course now it's not for me to say I've kept my word. But I know how the memory of that beautiful talent has always remained for me a standard and an ideal; I saw Savalier only then: it wasn't so long after that she was cut down in the fullness of her glory — stabbed with a knife in her beautiful back—and the scandal of her death has bedimmed the eyes of an illogical generation. And yet it seems to me a knifethrust was as good an ending as any for her. If she'd lived, she'd have grown old — as it is, she remains immortally young. She wasn't to be judged. Her dancing was pure fire, and if I have succeeded in being her equal, it's only that I've learned the trick of creating the effect which she was — without creating. I saw her, as I say, only once; but her art called me, and I have the haunting doubt that had the call been less compelling it might never have rung so loud in my ears. I went like an ox to the slaughter. It was with a curiously unchildish tenacity that I clung to my new-found belief. In ways I was a child, there was much I didn't understand, but dancing I have always understood, I brought to it from the first a mature developed faculty both of criticism and of study.

Every day as I went to school I passed a window with a sign painted upon the glass:—

FELIX MAKAROFF

TEACHER OF STAGE DANCING

I had passed it without notice a hundred times. The morning after the Christmas festival that sign came alive. I was all day in persuading Katie to ring the bell. I won my case late in the afternoon and we rose from our respective stocking darning and toys and went back there.

I was looked at with a very appraising eye. "Learn to dance — hey? Well — well — we will see. You say you have a father. Bring back your father here and if he says yes . . . But you must work!"

I looked about at the long bare room, illuminated partly by the scant daylight that found its way through the ground glass of the windows and partly by a flaring gas jet, and heated by an oil stove that gave forth in lieu of warmth a combined odor of iron and kerosine; and I wondered in such a place what other alternative there would be than work. It wasn't

a place to play in; it quite lacked the festive glitter, and I suspected that onions would form M. Makaroff's evening repast. Yet the quickened perceptions which helped me to note its ugliness were arrived at through a sort of exaltation — the thing attributed to a war horse at the gunpowder smell in his nostrils. The glitter and the festival were of course the completed trick, but this was the box out of which the trick was to be taken. I knew then what I've since grown to know so well as I've wandered about among the drops and flies of the theater — the sense of being in a country all mine. The glitter I shared with the world, but this — true lover that I was — I cared for more, just because the world wasn't there; veiled and cloaked and hatted, the lady might step forth — but for me was the lady herself. . . . I was in the box out of which the trick was to be taken, I was fitted to the task, I was in a sense the trick itself!

My father did say yes; he didn't very much mind what he said, and I studied with Makaroff for five years. I think of those years — I see them — as the monotonous sliding view outside a car window, or the shore that slowly moves by the rower. I went to school and the cultivation of one extremity in the morning, and in the afternoon I went to Makaroff and the cultivation of the other. It was part of the luck I've always had that both school and Makaroff were so excellent. The first was picked out by my mother from a page of advertisements in a magazine because the address given was in our neighborhood, and when I think of choosing a teacher of dancing upon the recommendation of a sign in the window I laugh at the escape of it. I might have been spoiled or maimed.

I wonder, if my maternal grandmother hadn't quarreled

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with every member of her family and therefore left the whole of her snug fortune to the only one who hadn't yet the gift of speech, if I should have had the organizing of my own life in such completeness. As a child I didn't have the actual personal spending of money; but my parents had the saving grace of honesty, and I had about it a certain say. It gave me in my family a sort of importance which I otherwise shouldn't have had. I was the heir, if not to millions, at least to a competence, and among people who had more debts than bank account I was distinctly a force to be reckoned with. At one time my father made considerable sums, but there were two to spend them and money was fire in their So my financial position backed me up, made complete the freedom which every one was too busy to cur-And then I wonder if a greater dependence wouldn't have been for me a good thing. But on the whole I'm glad that I have my own stupidities to blame for my mistakes, my own clevernesses to thank for my successes. My grandmother in dying did more for me than she probably could have done in living, and yet because I owe her so much I regret that we couldn't have been friends. Her kind quizzical eyes look out at me from a polished photograph of thirty years back, and they almost tell me that we're friends even as it is. She was a woman who had a great deal to bear; her sons were as disappointing as her daughter — her husband also — she was the one redemption of a besetting badness. I have the absurd fancy she still looks to me.

Besides her fortune and her house in Washington Square, my grandmother left me her library. It's to this more than to school that I owe what little education I have. It was an immense browsing field, and during the long Barrington summers I was put out upon it without lead or halter. Barrington was the place where we spent our summers; we went there always in the spring and came back in the autumn — I had an idea that the reverse process wouldn't be possible, that in Barrington there was no winter and in New York no summer. The city and the country, respectively, during those seasons didn't exist. I knew nothing then of the city I've since known so well, the pavements baked soft from the sun, the dusty trees in the park, the swathing linen and white marble of public interiors; and winter running riot among the green hills of Barrington was quite outside my range. In Barrington I rested from the fatigue which in the spring sometimes couldn't be denied. I took my rest curiously perhaps, lying under the trees, prone; in that primitive posture I've grappled the terse thought of Pope's "Essay on Man," and I've not so much read as absorbed word for word a modernized version of the Anglo-Saxon legends.

There was the story of Beowulf who dwells with his uncle King Hygelac, in Gothland and departs over the wavy see to slay the monster, Grendel. Hrothgar, King of the West Danes, had built for himself near the sea a great hall where he sat with his thanes at the mead-drinking and listened to the chanting of the gleemen; but his peace is disturbed by the terrible monster who comes from the wild marshland leaving death in his wake. Beowulf slays him in fierce combat; he slays also his revenge-seeking mother, following her down into a sea-pool so deep that it is a day's space before he reaches the bottom. I remember that at the beginning of combat, "Grendel's heart laughed." I remember my imagination of the mother giantess sitting astride the

thrown body of Beowulf and drawing out her broad short knife. But Beowulf struggles free, picks up a magic blade, and hews off her head. Slowly it must have stained the deep waters of the pool with blood. . . .

I took a very vivid interest in blood. I longed for the swish through the air of naked swords, and the whole world of glory would have been contained for me in the blaze and clank of battle. To me war has always been one of the very big things — I mean hand-to-hand fight between men. In a bloodier age I should have girded my lover's sword and sent him forth and strained for the first sight of his triumphal returning hosts. My lover, a great chief astride a big horse, and I holding out my welcoming arms and so reaching to a glory greater than his. . . .

Mrs. Cassagryer says I digress. To me this seems rather fine and not altogether inapposite to the trend of my story; I tell her that I have not the novelist's liberty to choose and to discard, I remember that which had kinship with myself. My subject-matter is clumsy with fact; I bring it in where I may as the inexpert traveler fits into his trunk a package of uncompromising shape. But Mrs. Cassagryer is adamant in the face of my excuses. I tender her apologies, not mine.

My grandmother hadn't stopped short at the Saxon Chronicles. I found the Spanish Ballads, translated by Lockhart—again gratification for my sanguinary taste—the splendid swinging verse of Thomas Campbell and Havelock Ellis's Mermaid Series of dramatists. I dipped gayly into Landor's "Imaginary Conversations" and went far in translations of the Greek philosophers. My young brain was a fermenting mass of ill-digested classic.

It was too much for me all at once. I seem destined always to have knocking at my door more than my house will hold. There's been much that I've of necessity missed just because my opportunities in certain ways have come together. Then, at least, my field was too wide; the whole one of English literature which Mrs. Cassagryer says is after all the only great art was spread before me, and my memory holds from the feast a list of empty names. I remember solidly some early war songs, Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe," Fielding's "Tom Jones," bits and lines here and there. I read Jane Austen and the Bronté sisters and remember of the last an impression of fog-swept English moors and something about a blond curly-headed young man who at dinner made his little boy drunk with wine. George Eliot, Dickens, and Thackeray were all present in charming early editions. Thackeray's "Vanity Fair" is one of the few books I now read. For the rest I haven't since had time; I don't speak of the actual hours and minutes, but my way since then has lain along other roads. There are many roads and we can't travel them all; we live but one life, wish hard as we may for the cat's privilege of nine. I feel the loss of the things I've missed, and shall miss — I have a consciousness of waste.

My grandmother was modern in her tastes. She went in for Meredith and some early tentative volumes of Henry James. She belonged to a generation shocked by Swinburne, but nevertheless possessed him, and Browning she admired to the extent of three separate editions. This was a compliment she paid to no one else but Edward Fitzgerald; seven bindings graced his rendering of the "Rubaiyat" and with them much concomitant literature. The "Rubaiyat"

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I hailed as very intimately mine even at the age of ten. It's the dancer's poem.

"Heaven but the Vision of fulfilled Desire, And Hell the Shadow of a Soul on fire—"

I have an idea knocking about in the back of my mind and some time it may work itself out. I usually set my face hard against the interpretive dance,—it's like program music or allegorical painting, but occasionally a mere suggestion can be followed without any attempt at literal rendering. "The shadow of a soul on fire"—to do that with the most physical, the most tangible, of the arts. . . . Besides the "Rubaiyat," out of the vast fluid mass of my youthful dilettantism, there comes solid a sparse volume of Rossetti, and in this volume one poem. "The Blessed Damozel" has been sung and praised and handled till all the freshness would seem to have been worn; it has the unfortunate triteness of the much quoted; but for its misfortunes I am not to blame. And it nevertheless has lines:—

"— filled

With angels in strong level flight."

"Have I not prayed in heaven? — On earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not prayed?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?"—

"The sun was gone now; the curled moon Was like a little feather Fluttering far down the gulf;"

I think I shall always remember that; and coming out to the piazza after tea time to find the crescent moon itself hanging low in the sky.

I read sometimes under the trees in front of the house, and sometimes in the big garret where my inheritance had been taken straight from Washington Square at the time of my grandmother's death. The house there was rented and the books had been boxed off to Barrington in compliance with some last word of their donor's. I remember the row of packing boxes pushed to the wall and the growing mystery of their contents. But they served a purpose, even before the day when I went at them with hammer and screwdriver; they provided my mother with an infinite opportunity for jest.

"Rosie," she used to say to me, "Rosie, when you've read all those, won't you know a lot? Lord — won't you? They've got books in them, Rosie, books like the ones you have at school, people's ideas. Fancy people going to work and writing down their ideas! — Oh, I've read 'em. Mother used to make me. But I never liked it. The times I've run away from school . . . A lot of stuffy old women in spectacles trying to make you learn things they don't know themselves — that's what's called education."

It was curiosity, rather than a definite appetite for learning, which finally set me to make use of my treasure. The garret was my playroom; I had marked it as mine with a table and chairs and covered the accessible parts of the slanting ceiling with cheap terpsichorean lithographs. The row of boxes became obstructive, they stared at me whichever way I turned. I knew little of books; as a family we didn't go in for them at all; people's ideas, my mother had said—it occurred to me at last to see what sort of ideas people had. There they lay for my sight, beneath the nailed strips of wood, and at last my prying tools bared them forth. I stood, Pandora-like, in the midst of my freed treasure. People's ideas scattered the rough garret floor; it seemed as if there arose from them a faint, half-visible exhalation.

IV. BARRINGTON

I REMEMBER my Barrington garret, the little slanting windows that looked south and east into the sun, the patterned sunlight on the floor, in other weather the thud of the rain on the roof. And mixed with these things are a few light memories — not unpleasant — of my mother. It would seem I owed them to her after all I've said. I've said that she was a creature of cities, compared her to a city street, given an impression of an artificial glitter and jangle. was because she was like this that in the country her claws were cut, she was in an element foreign to her, a fish out of its surrounding water. She came to the country in times of financial stringency; she found it also a convenient means of escape from her husband, who could be there but fleetingly, and most of all it had for her the novelty of rest. She loved change — rest was as complete a change as any. She broke it, however, by swift, prismatic flights — it was in the latter day of Saratoga's glory and she went there, I with her sometimes, and remember brass bands and light dresses and the tinkle of ice against glass. But for the most part she stayed quietly at Barrington — one might have thought she never had done anything else. Telegrams found her out, brought by a boy from the village who rode an early high bicycle, and she affected a golf cape of a startling plaid rather before the golf cape came into its popularity. I remember it, the plaids crossing and recrossing in a debauchery of reds and greens and blues.

I have memories more subdued, both of her raiment and of herself. I remember a little white gown she wore, all ruffled and ribboned, and herself very grave, bending low over an embroidery frame and telling me how she was making an embroidered centerpiece for the dinner table. I don't think it was ever completed, but in certain moods she worked It was in moods very similar that she went into the kitchen and bothered the cook with attempts at strange dishes. She used to dig in the garden at times, wearing the oldest, loosest clothes, and bringing forth plants which were never meant to be uprooted. She called it weeding. She was rather too consciously bucolic. One sees her as the heroine of a rural melodrama, a wayward daughter of the hills who has run away to the lures and lights of the city only to return — sinning but repentant — to the forgiving arms of her people. She would be, in the last act, trying to atone her transgressions, lending a strong and willing hand to the milking of the cows, and taking from her tired mother the burden of the week's wash. That's what I mean: in the city my mother was herself, in the country she was playing a part. And she played it with that same theatrical instinct which I inherit from her in a more directed form — I make use of it while she didn't realize the value of her possession. It's what I feel about people so often — people who fail — that if they knew their talents their story would be different.

I myself am essentially a dweller in cities, my life — the very nature of my calling — binds me to them. What fame I have, what loves and hates, have most to do with the man-made quarters of the globe. The greater part of my day begins when nature is settling her more primitive

followers to oblivion, and there are hours of the morning I rarely see, —a winter sunrise — I think I should like to be familiar with that, the sun coming up among snow clouds. . . . The stage is artificiality within artificiality, and it's the center of my universe; the whiteness of the footlights gives me more of my precious sense of life than does the soft young green of spring. And yet these perverted eyes of mine, that see the imitation as more real and more saline than the reality, see also the very real beauty and joy in the natural inviolate things. I'm a dweller in cities, but a child of all the world; my sympathy with the world — whole — is what makes for the success of my appeal — it's a kind of magnetism. Sympathy was the quality my mother grossly lacked.

Yet she had moments of kindness — even of extravagant generosity. I remember her thrusting her charming head up through the scuttle or hatchway by which my sanctum was reached, and making the bareness of my floor the noble amends of the parlor rug. It was red and oriental and far too fine — my more cautious sense saw that — and I asked her what she would have in the parlor in its stead. She said I was an inquisitive little monkey — she didn't know she was perhaps thinking of braiding my father's beard into a kind of mat! I visualized the Jovian one shorn, but my visions were blocked by the appearance above the scuttle of the rug's great rolled end guided from beneath by a struggling maid. In immediate ways my mother was a woman of her word. There was something about her rather big rather splendid. I never loved her; but I have always, strangely, admired her. My memory of her is woven with the memory of much which is painful — a strained unrest agitations and ferments — high notes of discord as sudden

as a waiter's dropping of a tray. She was also the dominant figure, the quite visible deity, of the city I loved so well. But I like best to think of her as she was in the long clear Barrington summers, when her unrest was transmuted to a vague uneasiness and her too strident beauty had the large toning background of nature.

I remember her by the garden wall talking to my father. He had come for a brief space — his bag lay on the path beside him — and he was looking at his wife with a curious intensity. She was looking up at him and laughing, and she reached up suddenly to his shoulders and shook them in her two hands. "Beast—" she said, "beast!" — yet didn't appear to be quarreling.

She used to take long walks in the woods and bring back great baskets of pine cones which she would throw into the fire for the crackling noise they made. And sometimes she would wander about with a rifle over her shoulder and have pot shots at squirrels and woodchucks; but once she missed her aim, and nearly killed a man who was digging potatoes in the next field, so that diversion was cut off from her. She hadn't the usual feminine horror of snakes — rather the reverse; she was always hunting them, and made herself a wonderful snakeskin belt. She would leave dead ones in unexpected places in accordance with some obscure idea of humor. Once my remembrances of her are opened, I could go on forever recalling. Everything she did, left on me a vivid impression — an impression as vivid and as penetrating as her voice, which was low and yet sharp, soft and yet with a kind of vibration. My mother's voice had always a qual-It startled. And my memory, playing ity of surprise. about among the events of which she was so intimately a part, is startled and arrested by the compellingness of her presence. It's as if that presence were jealous and wouldn't let me forget, but demanded at last the rights of motherhood which had been so long withheld.

But Barrington holds for me many other things besides that. I can't put it strongly enough how the perspective distorts and exaggerates. It's my memory of things which my mother dominates more than the things themselves. She influenced my childhood, she has influenced my whole life, but she never has done more. In fact, I have always been rather peculiarly alone, I think, curiously without the usual influences — the usual ties — that bind most lives together. I sometimes wonder what it is which holds me together at all. It's my dancing — and beyond — a sort of a glorified egotism which is in itself a powerful incentive to keep on, to express this egotism, not only in art but in life.

I remember at Barrington much that seems to me to be woven out of the very fiber of life. I remember the delicate green of spring and the apple blossoms and the strawberry patches white with bloom. I remember the croaking of the frogs in the marshes, the long dusk filled with it — the sharp staccato scream and the throaty bellow that came to a sudden agony of sound, expressive of neither joy nor pain, merely sound in sheer glory. It was like the splendid suspensive murmur of a Beethoven sonata. At dusk the whippoorwill voiced his abandonment, underfoot crickets scraped their fiddles; the ground, the air, and the leaves of the trees were informed with a light movement that brushed past like the unseen sweep of a woman's dress or the light brushing touch of fingers in the dark. And one with this though realized through another sense — were the acrid night smells, the smell of grass wet with dew and the stench from the stagnant pond in the pine grove across the road. Smells stirred, they rose and fell and came long distances on the edge of a breeze.

Barrington was set in a valley, and I remember the shoulders of the surrounding hills looming higher and higher out of mist until at last the mist was all cleared away and they lay, blue and green and yellow, in the morning sun. I knew the cool pink dawn of June, the adventure of stealing out into it, and the feel of the wet grass beneath my feet. I've heard at noon the cawing of crows and watched them — a sweep of black wings in a white noon sky. What legend has it that crows are the unsatisfied souls of the damned? There was a stream which gurgled and muttered unquietly, and a glaring road made of dust that had in my imagination an end quite other than the turn of the village street. was merely the end one saw. . . . In broad summer came heat and the buzzing of flies on a window pane and the old brown spaniel had a pendent tongue. I remember a meadow with haycocks stacked high, and in the barn a loft which always seemed to be richly tenanted by new-born kittens. I can hear now their shrill little cries and smell the close smell of the dry hay. I can hear Valentine Seymour calling to me from her perch under the eaves and see her slim, black-stockinged leg thrust out derisively into the void below. I can almost feel in my face the clinging spider's web which was the cause of my delay.

I've spoken of Valentine Seymour before, — mentioned her at the outset, and then apparently forgotten her; given her an entrance, and relegated her again to the obscurity of the wings. I used her to point a moral — one of the very most

obvious uses, I suppose, to which she might be put. talked largely of the morality of intellect — how in woman this morality was an altogether weaker, more weathercockish thing than it was in man — and I cited Valentine Seymour as a happy illustration of what I meant. I found her the perfection of her type — an exquisite passive stem, she was — I measured her falseness. . . . I vary about what I think of Valentine. But the Valentine of Barrington had hardly attained to the dignity of a type or to the perfection of anything. She had the beginnings of grace, however, and the beginnings of deficiencies. She had about her even then a beautiful uncertainty — faith in her was like faith in the bits of colored glass seen through a kaleidoscope; but she had over me a sort of spell, and it is a spell I have never wholly shaken off. Now I have a very cogent reason for hating her, and I do hate her, and I arise from my hate of her dazed, and make a dazed effort to determine the veiled soul hidden in the velvet depths of the reddish brown eyes that match her hair. And yet she's had with me strange moments of frankness — I should know.

It was a turn to the right and a little way down the road and you came to her house, a little way up and a turn to the left and you came to mine. It was a road well marked with the print of childish feet; we were inseparable friends. And our being friends brings me back to the curious foundation of our friendship — a friendship which has been all along not so important in itself as in its connections with other relations, other things and people. It's been inextricably bound up with the determinate factors of both my life and hers — I feel the end is not yet — and it therefore seems consistent that it should have begun at a point so near the source

of life as an attempt to take it away. I speak of the incident I long ago promised to recount, the attempt I made at murder.

I've had proof of it again and again that certain races, certain bloods, have universally for each other an attraction almost chemical. It's as if certain mixtures were the natural complements of other mixtures. Two brothers will love the same woman, a man will marry his deceased wife's sister in spite of all the laws of church and state, and sometimes the fortunes of two families will be mingled together for genera-This affinity isn't necessarily a thing of sex, sisters will be lifelong friends of sisters and brothers of brothers. And the sort of spell which Valentine Seymour still has over me isn't in sort so very different from the spell that came before I knew her, the influence — the utter dominance of her younger brother. He was the child of seven who held me, at the age of eight, in a state of subjection which bordered slavery. It wasn't by sheer force, either physical or mental, that he held me, and it wasn't by some anomalous childish version of love. He wove a spell — it was as if he had touched me with a conjurer's wand. He led me with beckoning baby fingers, he threatened me with round baby lips. He held me in an easy precocious little grasp all one spring and summer and autumn, and at the end he and I together planned a murder, which might have turned out as we had planned.

This murder of mine has nothing at all to do with my Big Horse. It isn't in any way characteristic either of me or of any one with whom I am ever greatly concerned. It's an incident, and has left a scar as merely wanton as though I had been struck by a stone from the hands of children at

play. Play was the cause and the beginning of it. That the play developed into something monstrous was accidental. Mrs. Cassagryer finds the whole business so much a thing of chance that she would have me leave it out altogether; but to me life is full of these broken bits. It lacks unity, I say, while of the presentation of it by Mrs. Cassagryer unity is the chief tenet. But I'm not attempting to do what she does — I shall present it in as broken a fashion as I see it, and this experiment with death is as broken as anything I've seen. Every one concerned appears in guises wholly foreign to them. It wasn't like me, even as a child, to take any one else's word for a thing as completely as I took Ted Seymour's, and even the fair Valentine herself, who in the end gave good counsel and also kept her own, acted in what was for her a wholly unnatural manner.

V. MURDER

VALENTINE is three years my senior. It doesn't seem so now, I think of her as being younger than I am instead of older — I've all along done the bigger thing — but when I was eight and she eleven (nearly nine, I was really) her three years were points of tremendous vantage. I knew her then merely as the elder sister of Ted, I gazed at her from afar; she finally for me descended from her height, but at first I regarded her as a halfway house between infancy and maturity. Ted, her brother, didn't like her at all. She figured largely in a scheme of avoidance that we both had. It was part of the game we played that no one should play it but ourselves, no one should know, no one intrude. We were robbers and lived in a robbers' cave stored and hung with treasure; we were at war with the world, but we presented to its unsuspecting eye an estimable front. Our devious ways were hidden; and it gave us a joy, when as respected citizens we walked harmlessly with Katie, to know in our soul of souls that we were not as we seemed. We had an illusion about ourselves—a fundamental proud consciousness of crime — we felt ourselves a danger.

Our cave was a clearing in the depths of a thicket, protected overhead by the spreading overhung branches of a pine tree. There was a glimpse of sky and the sun flickered through and lay along the red pine needles of the floor. The entrance was cut out from the solid thicket by some earlier and stronger hand; but there it was, ready to ours

Our imaginations were appeased. There was in the air something apart — what it was I only now begin to see. I grew to a full sense of sin, I grew at heart to be among the creatures furtive and lurking. I was forever being sworn to an eternal secrecy on the pain of an eternal torture; I learned what fear was — nameless fear of nameless horror. I felt my own will submerged, and felt an expectancy — part of the other expectancies in which I lived — an infiniteness of possibility always ending in blankness. To this day the odor of pine brings me to a hovering edge. I can shut my eyes and see the chopped branches of the thicket and feel still in my lungs the oppressive forest closeness, the closeness which comes not from the lack of air but from its density.

Over the entrance of our cave we had fastened the skull of a sheep with two leg bones crossed. Within we had our booty, beginning with strangely wrought claystones from the clay bank by the river and ranging in value to the handsome but maltreated skin of a wildcat. We had found the beast dead in a trap, taken it away, and taken the skin in a great peeling layer as Ted had seen done by guides in his native Canada — I think I haven't said that the Seymours were English-Canadians. We dried it primitively, nailed to a board in the sun, and finally hung it in triumph on our thicketed wall — a triumph no less dear because it was for our eyes alone. The trapper never knew the success of his trapping. But our predations were generally less serious, they deprived no one; we filched a worn tarpaulin from a neighbor's stable to use as a shelter in rain and we had a sack of nondescript treasure, — dented pennies, bits of colored glass, the broken handle of a silver pitcher.

It seems to me as I write of it now that our illusion was followed by delusion — we got to believe in ourselves too Nobody would have wished to disturb our peace, and yet we used to wait and listen and whiten at a sound. We really thought at last that we were hunted — I particularly; I feared discovery almost as much as I feared Ted. He fostered every fear I had — I don't excuse myself, I don't explain, I only set it down how things were. tried to convey a sense of paradox — child's play and horror — and I'm afraid now that I haven't made it plausible. The child's play doesn't quite ring clear, and as for horror, the nearest I come to that is the vision I have of my reader's hands raised in it. I deal with the thoughts and emotions of children in a manner that defies accepted theories — a manner nearly bordering the sacrilegious. For children are all little emblems of purity, only lower than the angels, and the bare suggestion that there may exist an exception like Ted — a little whited sepulcher — is at least in shocking courtesy. But even this might be forgiven if it were not for my admission — many times repeated — of the influence Ted had on me. Children aren't supposed to influence each other for bad. Or if they are it's a supposition to be looked after by the masters of schools and the mothers of families, highly specialized students of the genus child, judges in a children's court. The whole problem succeeds in being unsavory.

It was in the autumn, when for me imaginary horrors were piled high, that the only real horror came, our much heralded attempt at murder. And that had the effect of clearing the atmosphere, sending mere imaginations tumbling. After that is told there comes a less charged air, none too soon, I think. I've struck the discordant note already too

lingeringly and made it seem that my childhood had no redeeming note of joy—as though it were an ugly thing from which, in the natural course, I finally escaped. And yet it wasn't ugly; it had moments all along which were quite splendid, in ways altogether splendid.

Our secrecy went on for a surprising time; and then it was gradually borne in upon us that we were discovered. We began to see and hear movements and rustlings not to be accounted for by beast or wind. A twig would crack in our thicket and then another, and once there was a flick of color like a bit of a girl's dress. We looked one day and found a place where the undergrowth had been broken through and the dead leaves on the ground flattened. We were days in waiting and then — as we had almost come to thinking our suspicions unfounded — our wait was rewarded. We heard the crunch of breaking branches and the settling and return of their less brittle brethren. partly veiled by the foliage there came plain a crouching figure, the bright color of a dress stood out sharp and unexplained in the midst of the forest dullness. Ted Seymour pounced and clutched.

I clutched, too, and we dragged our captive into the clearing. It was a little girl, one of the farmer's children, whispered by the neighbors to be half-witted; she couldn't be sent to school and none of the other children would play with her. I don't know whether the neighbors were right or whether she was the helpless victim of some abominable village gossip, some country superstition; but I had for her always the little instinctive shiver of the normal for the abnormal, the clean for the unclean. It wasn't that she was bad, but that she was unformed. I

had for her mentally the same disgust which I've had more physically for the pickled embryonic rabbits of a biological friend.

I'm so thorough about this, not to excuse my subsequent conduct, but merely to in a measure explain it — though, as I said, I don't excuse, I don't explain. The child didn't seem human. She sat there staring at us with her queer light eyes, and presently she began to whimper; she was so much bigger than we that her fear of us was absurd. We still held her firm. We asked her what she was doing, how she had come; we put it to her that she had transgressed greatly. The whimpers resolved to an impish grin — it was too much, we shook her roughly; and at that, displaying unsuspected strength, she rose and put us from her. She made off through the bracken and left us agape. thought we both had was that she would tell. We saw our sanctum beset by invaders. The game was up, the game we'd played, our treasure would be scattered, our crimes brought to judgment. We both recognized the extent of our disaster, but it was from Ted that the great inspiration came.

He turned to me with his strange little face alight with it. "There's only one thing—"

- "What's that?"
- "To kill her."
- "You mean —?"
- "Yes, murder her kill her till she's dead."

The horror gripped me for a moment and I bathed in the light of Ted's hard little eyes. Except for their intentness I should have taken the thing as a joke; even as it was it seemed impossible, like a proposed trip to the moon. But

Ted's intentness compassed all things. He had the sort of vision that usually comes later in a man's life, the vision to which nothing is impossible or hidden or sacred. I had been about to voice my horror when suddenly my horror ceased. Murder seemed wholly reasonable. It was as if reason had turned a somersault; it was left with the breathlessness consequent upon that feat.

"Kill her —?" I asked. "How do you think we could?"
"I know we could. We're going to."

It was surely not our fault that we didn't. As I think of it now I still have the thrill of the near passing of danger. Day by day we watched for her and day by day our hate of her grew. It wasn't exactly hate that we had, but a sort of desire of hate. We wanted her for our hate as you might want a person for your love. The excitement of the chase filled us full. It didn't come to me that it was wrong to kill. I lived among hunters, I'd seen death in the striking butt of my father's gun, seen it heralded by a flash, and limp as the smoke cleared. And the bare fact of being human didn't make the prey immune; I knew that wantonly, for the lust of blood, I had the right to kill an animal, therefore why not the right to kill the thing I hated? I've thought of it since. . . . We take to ourselves a privilege, we give ourselves an immortal power by virtue of our immortal souls; and a soul is attained by the best of us only at moments, and sometimes the supremest of these are moments most crossing us between gods and beasts.

At first the prey kept cover. She seemed to divine that we meant her harm. We had a glimpse once of an impish face staring down at us from the high branches of a roadside tree, but we were then playing our part before the world with Katie flanking, a guarantee of impotence. We neither of us questioned our ultimate success and we neither of us, I think, imagined our crime as bathing us in blood. We would puff out the life we hated as we might puff out a candle we didn't need for light. It would be simple when our opportunity arrived, and no one would ever know. We would cover our marks—Ted adjured his gods to trust him for that. At one hour the enemy would be alive—have her place in the plan of Barrington—and at the next she would have gone forth into the void.

Finally our chance came. We found the child asleep among the stubble of a field where a late crop of hay had been thriftily garnered. Her head was fallen in the hollow of her arm and her mouth hung open, I remember, with the breath coming through it. We looked at her and for the first time we looked at the reality of our project. "We'll smother her with hay," said Ted, "and leave her—"

We piled it about her softly, over her breathing mouth, and covering her face and her body and the worn shoe that reached out awkwardly. According to our experience we were thorough. I don't know why, for myself, I felt compelled to be so thorough. My hate had left me and the excitement of the chase had dropped away; this actual work of death was performed with but its impetus. We had desired her for our hate, and now that our desire was near to fulfilment the pull of it was gone, but something instinctive and compelling prevented us from turning back. At last Ted stood away a little and it was I who laid the final wisps.

We crept off over the stubble. We crawled through the fence which divided that field from the next, and then I

MURDER

remember running down a sharp incline to the main highway. We walked that, and rather by chance found ourselves in front of the Seymours' house. Ted darted in, expecting me to follow him; but instead I stood a moment, uncertain, and then continued on down the road. It was the first break in a habit of obedience. I was fresh from a reality that threw out of balance the reality of delusion in which I had been steeped. I had reached to the culmination of pain and Ted Seymour went to nothing before my eyes. I don't mean that then I had it all plain like that, but in retrospect I see it so. And I see the whole way of it, the illusion and delusion and reality, as perhaps holding true for more mature complexities. It's an allegory — a fable — from my first utterance of the word robber, to the great overwhelming dismay by which I was seized or struck, all at once, as I walked on down the road beyond the Seymours' house.

I had been thinking of the half-witted child in a way that presupposed her to be alive, and it came to me suddenly that she was dead. I forgot completely that any one but me had been concerned in her death. My first horror was for my own power. As a match tossed among dry forest leaves may consume the forest, or a pebble thrown in a pool make ever widening circles, so had I touched a spring which set the whole machinery of the cosmos to clamoring. I shouldn't have been surprised at some violent subversion of nature. But the golden rod shone the same dusty yellow along the side of the road, the September sky was bright, and far down the valley was a cluster of roofs where Barrington converged to a denser population. The smiling autumn country gave no sign of alarm; it seemed neither to blame

nor to condone, but to leave me with the consequences of my horror all upon my own small shoulders. I was physically sickened.

Running and walking and stumbling, I made my way blindly. Some boys in a farm wagon called after me; followed by accusing cries, I turned from the road, clambered up the embankment, across the first field and through the fence. I straightened and looked; but my search was cut short, my vision blocked, by a lanky figure in a worn calico dress. It took me a second more to understand that the half-witted child was as alive as she ever had been. She was walking away from a place where the hay lay scattered; some of it had clung to her dress and to her hair. When she saw me she broke into a run, looking back over her shoulder to know if I were following her. I wouldn't have followed her. I looked at her and presently I shook my head as a dog does when he comes up out of the water.

Then it was Valentine's turn. I passed again into the main highway and as I went by her house she came out and called to me. I asked her what it was she wanted. She invited me to come in. I told her I couldn't, but she stood for a long time on her porch steps and argued with me and at last I yielded to her persuasions. She took me directly upstairs to her room and shut the door. I wondered. She turned on me and announced she knew the whole thing.

"What thing —?"

"I know it all — you and Ted and your cave and your robbers and Lucy Sykes. I feel that Lucy Sykes is my fault."

For a time I was bereft of speech. At last speech came — I gasped a question. "How—?"

It seemed, as she put it, that she had long suspected her brother of being up to some game or other—she admitted frankly that he was a little devil—and she felt towards the community at large a certain responsibility. She remembered Ted's famous destruction of a brood of very promising duck's eggs, and she had hardly forgotten the occasion of his editing the morning mail as it hung in bags on the community's gate-posts waiting for the carrier. She couldn't ignore the fact that she was, after all, his elder sister. It was on this ground that she excused her prying. She had sent Lucy Sykes, who wasn't as half-witted as she sometimes appeared, to investigate—it being beneath Valentine's dignity and comfort to crawl on hands and knees through thorny undergrowth.

- "What did Lucy Sykes do it for?"
- "Five cents," said Valentine, succinctly.

The hireling gave her mistress count of our treasure. The game seemed harmless, but the investigation was kept up and at last, as we all knew, was itself discovered. Valentine became alarmed, she knew her brother's possibilities; she suspected him of revenge and hoped he hadn't already taken it. She hadn't meant that for five cents Lucy Sykes should run a personal danger.

- "Then you don't know!" I said.
- "I know that I wouldn't trust Ted out of the door —"
- "But you don't know what we tried to do?" My obedience to Ted was all pent up within me and I came out with the whole story.
- "You know what would have happened, don't you?" Valentine had waited until I was quite through.

[&]quot;No - what?"

"You both of you would have been put in prison for a while, and then you'd have been hung."

"You mean the State's Prison in Barrington?"

"Yes — the one the servants all think it's such fun to visit on Sunday." Valentine received an evident pleasure from her recital of our escapes. "But if I were you," she said at the end, "I'd hoof it. I'd tell Ted exactly what you thought of him."

I had a point of anxiety. "Are you going to tell him what I've told you?"

"Piffle! I never tell him anything."

And she kept her word — which with her wasn't usual. She kept her word, and as reward for my keeping mine to her — a promise I gave her to hoof it, as she said — she took me on herself, she bent from her three years of height and deliberately cultivated my acquaintance. That very afternoon she turned direct from the subject of murder to the pleasanter one of paper dolls, in whose manufacture she showed an uncommon skill. For my benefit she made some dancers with wonderful frilled skirts and I criticised the angle of their legs.

I never had a final talk with Ted, I never told him exactly what I thought of him — partly, perhaps, because I didn't know. I don't know now. He was all that his sister said he was, and more besides; but one doesn't judge a person in their infancy — one awaits mature development. And Ted's development has been better than his start. It may be that in his hard little brain he grew to realize the inexpediency of a career of lawlessness; he's taken instead to stockbroking, and is considered by those who can judge to show much promise. I imagine him as going through the world a more

resistant surface than anything he meets with on the way. He's singularly fitted for going, he's light of movement — compact — girt for the race. His sparsely filled knapsack contains a surety of will; he's an exemplification of how much can be accomplished with just that. At seven it was his will that triumphed, at forty-seven it will be his will that triumphs if his promise comes true. I should never accuse him of an unvolitional action or emotion. On the other hand, I should accuse his sister of many — yet she called him a devil and set herself above him.

I don't think Ted wanted a final talk. It was easy to avoid each other, as we soon went back to the city, and the next year a family with boys in it came to live at Barrington and Ted found his needs better met by them. Without explanation the game of robbers lapsed. I remembered it like a dream — the waking violent — a dream of horror, shot with light when my imagination rode high and the sun flickered through the pine boughs. And like a dream it was incomplete, a tune half played, a chord unresolved. as I said, a broken foolish thing, and I raise child's play to an unnecessary importance in speaking of it at all. there are times when I feel that it's left a scar and the tissue hasn't grown. I wonder that I'm never to see the end of it. I look at Ted Seymour, a young man close-knit, with sharp hard eyes, terribly occupied with his own success. It's one of the things in life to which there seems no sequence.

VI. FLESHPOTS

I HAVE somewhere said that the granting of my father's divorce marks for me an intrinsic definite division. It was the closing gate of childhood. I stood on a threshold, and there lay to my feet the big world unshackled. I always had had freedom; but it had been the freedom of neglect, the freedom of being allowed to do what I pleased because what I did was of no matter. But now what I did mattered exceedingly. My mother had gone her way and in doing so she had left behind her responsibilities and powers. They were responsibilities I did my best with and powers I didn't happen to greatly misuse.

The effect of my new position was largely a moral one. I had the right, if I chose to exercise it, of dismissing the cook — I could, if I wished, have plum pudding for dinner every night, or give unlimited birthday parties to all my friends, or sleep on the parlor sofa or wear dresses with trains. And if, happily, none of these were rights I chose to assert, nevertheless their existence was very real to me. I look back on all the powers — all the rights — that I've never asserted. They stretch behind me, a clamoring trail of uncommitted indiscretions, from nightly plum pudding to errors far more grave. All along, if I'd chosen, I could have had the devil of a time — I sometimes wonder at my choice. I sometimes have wanted to choose quite differently, I've wanted very much — all sorts of things. And yet it's incontestable that when judgment comes thoughts won't count for deeds.

The position I found myself in at thirteen is one which I look back at now aghast. My father would absent himself for whole days and nights and I was left without any sort of guardianship. I was accountable to no one. My father seemed to regard my affairs as not being in any way his. He once asked — facing me across the dinner table — how I was getting on, how I liked the new deal, as he put it; and though this easy reference to my mother's exile struck me as indelicate, I replied that I liked it very much. He was glad and left the house the next morning not to return for a week.

The quiet was what impressed me most. My mother's presence had been like a perpetual accustomed sound, her absence was like its sudden ceasing. In the silence every movement was a disturbance; the house seemed but half lived in, rather as though left to the tender mercies of a caretaker. After ringing the bell one waited long to be admitted, and feet upon the stair made prints in the dust. My mother's room, with its jolly wall paper of roses peeping through a trellis and its rose satin bed dressings and window curtains, was dim and filled with damp air of the sort that never has been warmed. The best habits of the servants had been none too good, but now grew worse. I remember untidy aprons, and table silver needing polish. Katie kept her standard up and attended to her duties, —her whole conduct was a mute protest against the general sliding, — but Katie's area of authority made that which was outside it stand out in contrast.

Yet there was a sense of peace, not unpleasant. There was a sense, also, that the peace couldn't last, could prove but a breathing space between one tumult and the next. There

were days when I felt the air tense and I banged the doors to hear the sound echo in the hall.

I had a playroom on the third floor, and I had the piano moved up from the parlor and strummed on it haltingly. Pianolas were just coming into general use and my father gave me one for Christmas; after that music of a sort filled all the empty spaces. On the rare evenings when he was at home my father would come up and smoke a cigar on my sofa and I would pedal out the big strains of the "Soldiers' Chorus." He liked that best, and then the intermezzo from "Cavaliera," the toreador song from "Carmen," and a certain negro cakewalk popular at the time, called the "Mosquito Parade." I remember his picking up a pair of castanets that were lying in the clutter of dancing things on the table and clacking them very vigorously and very incorrectly. Our noise must have waked the dead. But there was one evening when it wasn't enough, however, and he took me to the Café Marin to dinner. It was the occasion of my life.

The idea came to him all at once. "I say, Rosie—" he loomed large in the doorway—"I say, let's you and I go on a spree—somewhere for dinner—"

"But dinner's ready here!"

"That makes the devil of a lot of difference! Your mother wouldn't dine with me in public — she said she valued her reputation — but I guess yours can stand the strain. Come — get on your things." He followed me through to my bedroom and waited while I put on my hat and coat.

At the Café Marin we received a great deal of attention from an unctious person who, my father said, was the head waiter. He couldn't do enough for us; I was pressed into a conspicuousness which I felt quite inadequate to grace.

I shone in the reflection of my father's glory, who seemed to be a very glorious father indeed. He was hailed on all sides, plumed glistening ladies gave him their smiles, men in passing called his name. The violins that sounded lightly from an overhanging balcony, the fountain dripping into a pool that gleamed prismatically from beneath, the corks drawn from gold-wrapped bottles with a noise of popping, all seemed to do these things because he was there. He had in the midst of it all a tremendous impressiveness — it all was in his honor.

I've since paid one of the prices of celebrity, and honor of the sort found in hotels and restaurants has gone rather small to me; I have it to an extent which makes me avoid its haunts, but then even the reflection of it was new to me. Then everything was new to me. In spite of the telegrams, the ringing bells, the many initiations of my hearth, I was still remarkably unsophisticated. In fact, my contact had been so close with much of which most children are carefully kept in ignorance that the very nearness, the very sanction, had at last taken away the glamor. I didn't bother my head; especially in the years immediately preceding the divorce I was so busy with my dancing that I didn't have time. The agitations in the midst of which I lived fell into the background and grew not to matter. At Makaroff's there were agitations also, careless gossip of the theater, but I knew the theater best in its workman's dress, and I presented to its other side ears chronically closed. But now, at the Café Marin, the whole thing for the first time struck in. I saw and heard and knew. It seemed as if I saw not only with my eyes, but that my every pore was open and alive to new impressions.

I was hushed with the tumult of the loud public voice and I watched the bright public glare with staring eyes. I basked in it, and presently I was aware of a process — curiously automatic — going on within me, a curious manifestation of the chameleon histrionic humor. I began to take on the outward color of my surroundings, to give myself over to them. My little girl's face grew to a look of the faces about me, my best hat — which I had with difficulty been persuaded to keep on—seemed to nod with feathers. . . . I had always associated dining in my hat with the hurry of railway stations; now I saw that a hat made of dining a high ceremony, — one went wreathed and garlanded to the feast. I was glad to be able to pay to it this tribute. I felt less inadequate to the reflected glory of my position — I even began to doubt the absolute reflection of it. I was tall for my age and had, in spite of my obvious youth, my short skirts, and ribbontied hair, a trained talent of self-presentation; no heights or depths of embarrassment could cause me to find awkward the management of my hands and feet. It gave me a certain superficial maturity. I was out of place in the Café Marin, but I didn't appear to be as shockingly out of place as I really was. I can see now how bizarre was my father's action in bringing me there at all; and yet, as he did, my professional pride makes me glad in the knowledge that my first public trial didn't find me wanting.

I had seen the glow and heard the echo before. I'd been about in the wings with the actors off the stage waiting for their cues, or coming off with the applause still fresh; I knew the arrivals and departures. But this — now — was the 'completed trick.' I took it to be the end and aim of all I'd seen and heard.

Certain privileged stratas of society, so I understood, lived and had their being in an element called society. Their affairs of life were carried on at parties, receptions, balls, dinners — these last in the privacy of their own dwellings. And certain other stratas, to which my family belonged, existed more publicly. For them the doors of life opened to a key merely golden. For it took money to bask in the public glare and swell the public voice — money and the easy spending of money. I was struck then, as I've been struck a thousand times since, with the tremendous unnecessary cost of it — the sense, all about, of a reckless profusion. It began with the polish of the men's shoes, the rustle of the women's petticoats, and ended — less humanly — with the hanging cut glass of high chandeliers.

The whole place seemed to be possessed in a tortured decoration, — a decoration which in its first and simpler stages had evidently been dissatisfied with itself and so rushed on to destruction. The marble columns were adorned with filigree, and the filigree was gilded. A pattern of intertwining grape leaves was a background for bunches of grapes, very real and purple and solid in the plaster. The fountain — the one which dripped and was lighted from beneath had in its center a group of grinning fauns whose hairy goat legs were modeled to the last hair and whose pointed ears pointed and strained in an eternal listening. Those listening ears seemed to hold fast the passing moments of revel, the clatter of silver, the queer soft tread of waiters' feet, the laughter that came a little eagerly and fluttered and panted to its goal. They listened also to the crackling of banknotes and the jingling of coin with which this great machinery of revel was constantly oiled. I had the disturbing fear that if for a moment the crackle and jingle were to cease, the whole scene would vanish before my eyes like a fairy spectacle at the striking of the clock. There would be a scurry and scamper up shabby stairways, a sweeping and clearing — perhaps the violating hands of movers — and the big dining room would turn into a deserted cavern. The listening ears would be rewarded only with the scratching of mice as they nibbled the crumbs that lay bedded deep in the carpet's velvet pile. I would have gone with the rest.

And I shouldn't have liked that, — I had no wish to go. The visible world I always loved so well was visible in a new guise, — I was absorbed. I had the assurance I've had, happily, at all the more important junctures of my life, that this was life itself, and everything I had mistakenly thought was life had been but a prelude and a preparation. For the first time I saw.

There was the pretty little woman with wonderful yellow hair and a mouth streaked bloody with rouge who occupied the table next but one. I saw her so vividly and so intensely that at last my apprehension of her had in it something of pain. She had pretty eyes that met mine in a half-veiled smile. She seemed to me the fairest thing in the new fair visible world, and her escort — a heavy man, sleek of jowl, who divided his attention equally between her and his wine-glass — the most fortunate of men. He interested me, too. It was what I saw in his eyes — the place seems positively to have teemed with ears and eyes — what I saw in his eyes when he looked at her, the flecked iris darkening and expanding, the pupil contracting to a fine black pin-point behind which there glittered a primitive heat, barely held in check.

It was as if the beast there were made cunning by the expediencies of civilization. It's a look I've since known, and I may confuse my past with my present comprehension. But there was at any rate something of menace — though the slightly unexplainable fear that I had was set at rest by what I saw in the look of his charming companion. Back of her smile was the hardness of steel. I had the elating assurance that it was proving a difficult rampart.

All my assurances were elating then. I was astir with them and with my new world. And I felt it to be a world that I should come to know better than I have. It had then a fascination for me which I have since outgrown; its sharper corners were rounded in a certain vagueness and it attained Beautiful women through that the veiling haze of romance. were pursued through Elysian fields by men in whose eyes were hot desire and the lust of the hunt. By the way were feasting and song and jingling gold, and the way was paved with a white that glared. The glare blinded me, but what I was yet able to see stirred me hugely — even the cost and the waste of it had its appeal for me. I have said I should be honest about myself, and perhaps I keep my word too well; I damn myself too far in telling so much — but I know I should have damned myself a good deal farther for the chance of casting my rôle of mere spectator. I could have trod the Elysian fields with the best. It was as if I had gone through with the mere visible aspect and the mere chameleon change and reached to something formative and primary. I caught the spirit of my new world to the very depths of my little mummer's soul. I was filled full with fiercer, fresher longings than any possessed by the man with the expressive eyes. My startled gaze turned inward to meet them; a whole nature I had never known came forth for my surprise.

New impulses clamored about me. It was my first personal concern with the impulses of sex, and in the Café Marin that was the cultivated — the dominating — flower of the garden. I looked at it as closely then, perhaps, as I ever have done since. I've been too busy with other things, I've given to it for the most part but a careless sort of glance; this nature which I knew for the first time then, I knew then as well as ever I have. As one grows in wisdom there are things to which one turns instinctively a slanting cheek, an inattentive ear. But my instincts then were not in that direction. I hadn't so felt the infiniteness of possibility since the days of the robbers' cave. But in the days of the robbers' cave possibility had been blind, had ended in blankness, while in this fleeting hour — an hour only needing to be grasped — possibility was very seeing, its ends very real.

The man with the expressive eyes, who sat at the table next but one, had put out his great hand over the white cloth; I watched it where it lay relaxed and idle. That was a hand to grasp the fleeting hour — it lay passive now, the fingers half folded and the powerful thumb limp. But to me it was the scabbard of a magnificent unused strength, a strength I had the desire to feel, for I too was strong, even in my hands were the trained muscles of the dancer.

And meanwhile my father went smoothly on with the business of dinner, quite unconscious of his daughter's thoughts, quite innocent of the havoc he had incurred. As his meal progressed his handsome features became suffused with a ruddy glow, but his innocence and his unconsciousness saved him from a blush which would have gone to the very roots

of his scarlet beard, matching them. He chatted affably, settling to the agreeable expansion consequent upon the happy mean where repletion stops short of excess. He lit a cigar for which the light was held by the head waiter himself, and he sipped an aromatic liqueur that shone red and amber through its little pointed glass. He looked at me over the rim.

- "Well, Rosie, what do you think of it?"
- "What do I think —?" I was beyond thought.
- "Yes, do you like it are you having a good time glad you came?"
 - "Why, of course!"

He stroked me parentally. "That's my own little Rosie! I didn't know — you're such a quiet little thing. Is there anything more you want to eat? Some more ice cream — one of those?" He indicated a pyramid of cakes being served to another table.

But my hunger was unappeasable by food. I was watching the couple at the table next but one who were making preparations to leave. The man was having a whispered colloquy with his waiter over some item of his check. At last the discussed point was cleared up, they both smiled, nodded and understood. The thing was paid. Change was brought on a silver tray, looked at, and waived aside. The woman with the wonderful hair nestled into a great cape of fur and lace. They passed us, the man leading the way, and as he went on towards the door his companion paused. She came to a stop beside us.

My father, opposite me, hadn't had my range of vision; she burst upon him freshly. He got to his feet. "Why—" But she only had a word, and that a movement of lips

rather than sound of voice. "Hello, Billy, she's sweet, I guess her Dad is pretty proud—"

"Thanks. I guess he is —"

The man had finally come to a halt in his course outward, and stood looking back. "Come on, Gertrude."

Gertrude summoned her easy smile. "I'm coming!"

It was the ultimate climax. It brought me direct to the very center of drama.

I turned and watched her as she made her way through the big gay length of the room. There was about the slim, moving figure something ominous — significant — one knew not quite of what. It was as if there rested on the unconscious little shoulders all the weight and meaning of the visible world they typified so well. It rested lightly — as lightly as the rhinestone buckles on her shoes; she accepted her charge with grace, and her destiny with a courage worthy of a nobler. So Marie Antoinette might have gone smiling to the cold severing steel. It had come to me suddenly that of all I'd seen and heard, this at the Café Marin might not be the end and aim after all. The great white public glare might have as a finality a glare yet whiter, and the loud public voice be finally resolved to a yet more human cry.

"I say, Rosie, don't stare."

VII. INNER LIFE

AFTER the Café Marin it was strange to say that life went on quite as it had before. Nothing unusual happened of any sort at all. I lived more than ever at the edge of expectancy, I waited for the unknown to occur, I should have been surprised at nothing. But the things I waited for were like watched pots that refuse to boil.

For a while I slept ill at night; I tossed unquiet upon a comfortless bed, and the darkness was peopled with shadows. I dreamt of a great hand that groped and clutched and then lay limp, exhausted by effort, replete with conquest. Charming blond heads floated hurriedly in infinite space, as though blown by a swift guiding wind. A very red lip made moan for its mate which appeared out of space and joined it. White teeth came between and a face loomed, shaking like the face on a magic lantern slide. Another face shot out of darkness into light, where it waited and hovered. The two faces melted into one, and dimmed, until only the mouth and at last only the lip remained, curled in a sort of sarcastic triumph. In this fantastic concern of mine with humanity I seemed only to see it so — in its dismembered parts — I seemed to have been admitted under favor to some back alley-way of the Creation. Pieces — bits of life — lay scattered for my sight. There was nothing I didn't see, beauties and horrors, and from the last I would awake screaming and hear the echo of my own screams. Then the shadows would go and the darkness fall dense in the empty Katie slept on the next floor with the servants.

I was filled with an inordinate curiosity about all that went on forever about me; I looked at strangers in the street and wondered where they were going and from whence they had come — they seemed primed with mysterious business. I made the classic discovery that they all had names and had all been born, and knew, doubtless, more of the great principles of humanity than did I myself. I should like to have engaged them in intimate conversation. And perhaps the most extraordinary and the most upheaving thing which the Café Marin did for me was the view it gave me of my father as Billy.

I had known him as a father and as the rather misfit mate of my mother, the relation marital being a necessary concomitant of the relation paternal; I had known him as an engineer — William Rhodes Carson. But all these knowledges conjured dignified visions. I never had known him as the sipping bee among flowers who called him Billy. was a disrespect to the splendor of his beard. It desecrated the Jovian image. Seeing him drunk was far less disintegrating; there might be a sort of high drunkenness of the gods — Olympian orgies — nectar — but Billy. . showed me depths. It was a jesting insult which dragged him to the common dust. To my mother belonged the sole privilege of insult and Billy was an usurpation. Yet, as I say, it gave me a view of him I hadn't had before, a view both of his absences and his presences. The bang of the street door in the small hours became a sound fraught with The old days of arrivals and departures were superwonder. seded — the old going and coming from mystery into mystery.

But my dancing saved me from a too entire preoccupation with fruitless questions. Every afternoon I went to Maka-

roff's, and I always gave him my whole attention unsullied. Work cleared my brain, and sometimes at least my thought of it extended beyond its actual hours — even lapped over to the work of the next day, and so crowded out my thought of anything else. And it seemed as if my thought — or my power of it — for these other things, the mysteries and the elucidations, went into that of my work and strengthened it; as if my brain, or my capacity, had been enlarged by the flood of new ideas and this enlargement made for the benefit of more legitimate knowledge. My art of dance matured, began to overstep the line which divides art from mere decent skill. Makaroff put a question with some urgency: what was I going to do, was I preparing for the professional stage, or was this amusement? He put it to my father, coming one Sunday afternoon in a remarkable get-up of checked trousers and frock coat and a tie which was in itself a creation. He sat in the little reception room downstairs and confided his belief in my genius to a slightly inattentive parent. father had been on his way out, and was impatient at the "Rosie be a dancer—? Zzzpp!" He drummed with two fingers on his knee in imitation of a ballerina's twinkling legs.

"That sort of thing, hey? Why, Rosie can't do that. Besides, it's going out of fashion. Now, if you were to offer her a chance to draw her eighteen per in the front row of the chorus, why, I'd believe you! But she doesn't have to, thank God, and there you are." He regarded the matter as closed, but not so Makaroff.

Makaroff's expression conveyed a delicate hint of contempt. "I zink, Mr. Carson, you should have made your decision before you began."

"I didn't begin. The child came to me and said she wanted to take lessons. I said, take 'em ahead — I fancied it as keeping her out of mischief instead of getting her into it — and she's been taking 'em ever since. I should think she would have learned something — I shouldn't have much use for her if she hadn't — but you can carry a joke too far." His manner indicated that this one was in that danger.

"You object?"

"Object—? Never in the world! Look how strong it's made her — it's good for her, of course. Have you ever seen her turn a back somersault?"

"I have not ze pleasure. I tell you she is artiste — she has ze big genius — and I tell her it before herself because she will not spoil."

"You make her sound like milk," commented my father. He turned to me. "Well, Rosie, what do you think of it?"

I had been sitting quietly, not very much interested in the conversation, which held for me little of novelty — not even very curious.

The question had to be repeated. "Well — what do you think?"

"You must know what I think. Of course I shall go on the stage; I've never had the slightest intention of doing anything else." The words formed themselves. "But I'm not ready yet. I want to study—to see—I have now only the bare foundation of what I want to do. With all due respect to M. Makaroff, I've only begun." As I talked, it grew clear to me; I never before had known so definitely.

My purpose had worked, largely unconscious of itself. I had gone on from year to year, barely looking beyond, and it was only as the future was presented to me so concretely

that I considered and rejected a future without dancing. But now I knew it couldn't be, and the force of my knowledge was communicated to the others, lending stability to the wildness of Makaroff's assertions and wildness to the opposite assertions of my father. I sat there in the tawdry little room between the two men, who — between them — might have been said to have held the balance of my fate. I sat there, perfectly secure in my belief in myself. What they wished me to do, even what Makaroff wished — and his wishes happened to coincide with my own — was a question outside and apart. "Of course I shall dance — what else should I do but dance —?"

"You see!" said Makaroff; "she knows!"

My father got to his feet. "Oh — Rosie always knows!" But I don't think he realized at all that it was settled. He had an engagement elsewhere and he was preoccupied with his now unavoidable lateness.

Makaroff rose and stood, his shabby silk hat in his hand. "I felicitate you on your daughter, monsieur; I myself have a daughter, but she is married and has six children — six. She has not the true talent. It is a talent which ze good God has given it to you to bring into ze world; again I felicitate you. You were ze happy instrument —"

"Oh — I'm humble. I know I'm not worthy of the honor bestowed on me in being Rose's father; but I think I am, you know, and naturally I'm humble." This again put him in a new light.

His engagement pressed, and he made his excuses to Makaroff, who also was on the eve of departure. They left the house together, and I watched them from the window as they went down the steps, the ballet master and the engineer.

It was the engineer who had performed the greater service to the world, he — humble, happy, whatever — had been instrumental in bringing into it a true talent. It had taken the ballet master to explain him to himself. I turned from the window and went out into the hall; from the stairway leading to the basement laughter was wafted up. Katie's day out, and the other servants were evidently taking advantage of her absence by giving a party. I stopped at the stairway's head and listened — from the sounds that reached me it must have been a very glorified sort of a party Mirth reached hilarity, I distinguished the untaught rumble of the cook, the gay squeal of the waitress, and then voices unknown — the richness of the male and the falsetto of the aged. My position in life debarred me from a closer contact; I turned away with a sense of loneliness which must have been the loneliness of genius. I escaped to my room on the third floor, where I communed with my own great spirit for the rest of the afternoon.

Gradually the mysteries and the elucidations — my father's engagement that so pressed, for instance, which at first occupied me intensely — were blotted out, gave place to the greater mystery of me myself. Me, Rose Carson, and Rose Carson's belief in her. I felt again the stir of possibility, but this time the possibility was my own. Instead of being in the grip of a power I felt myself to be that power; instead of a frightened wandering in some back alley-way of Creation, I myself was Creation. It wasn't only the Café Marin — the new visible world — but all the visible world together that turned to a mass of shadows and waited, shadowy, to be brought by me to solidity and life. It was but so much material for me to work with, for me if necessary

to discard. I no longer needed the strength of alien hands, my own strength satisfied my desire; I could grasp the fleeting hour at my own pleasure. The little woman with the subtle smile, the man whose eye and hand expressed so much, even my own father and mother and Valentine Seymour and Makaroff went their respective ways to the tune of my dance. The world existed unaware of itself; it was led blindly in the thrall of an enwrapping melody of which I alone grasped the theme.

I looked out to the street below and to the patches of snow melting and mixed with grime; I saw the brown stone fronts of the houses opposite, and unavoidably through an open window the shirt-sleeved figure of a man shaving. A carriage drove by, its wheels softly crunching an uncleared snow bank, and two girls passed, much preoccupied with saving their Sunday best from contact with the pavement. An old lady led in leash a fat pug dog and another dog had his outing watched from an area-way; a fight seemed imminent, but was prevented before it was too late. From Sixth Avenue came the harsh roar of an elevated train, and eastward the chimes of Grace Church ringing for four o'clock service. begun — it was a year when Lent began early — and one heard, not so much with ears as with a knowledge that it was so, the ringing of church bells all over the city. A young man and a young woman directed belated steps to worship. They were brushed and tailored to the last degree, swept and garnished for the proper reception of the holy spirit, their neat gloves — the woman's clasping her prayer book — would alone have given evidence of sanctity. And yet these people were but flesh and blood, sweep and garnish as they might they still possessed certain of the same attributes so emphasized by the people at the Café Marin. They filled their places in the great human comedy, — were only yet another variation of it, — the comedy I had discovered was enacted for my benefit. Beneath the window of my room on the third floor, at the Café Marin, Barrington, everywhere—it was all for me — a carpet for my dancing feet.

The white glare lighted my swaying draperies, the great hand with the fingers half folded and the powerful thumb limp stiffened in applause, the loud public voice was loud with praise, the women whose destinies it needed courage to face were held back from their fate. All the poor dismembered parts of life were fused together to a single embodiment, which was the wonder of my dancing, and a single figure, which was I. My exaltation rose clear. And thus, at thirteen, in a very insanity of egotism, was buried the first great urgency of the flesh. . . .

It was the season of the year when winter turns towards spring; the air was filled with a vague unrest — promises half held out of blandishments to come; the drab skies were streaked with light and little zones and areas of warmth softened the sharpness of the winter's cold. My windows looked out to the edge of a southwest sunset and the fire flickered and fought with the sunlight in the grate. My rug—the same one of which my mother had once robbed the Barrington parlor — showed a little shabby in its enforced rendering up of worn surfaces to the brightness. A potted plant that had long ceased rightful flowering feebly renewed its youth in a few sparsely budded spears. Through my open door came the scent, traveled upward, that constituted a pledge of dinner. In my loneliness and my greatness I at least had that, and disobeyed the time-honored tradition of

genius. For it is written in the annals that genius, like virtue, shall starve, shall win its way through thorns and thrive on blows. And here was I with the security of a comparative luxury, with no hindrance save the half-hearted objections of an indulgent father. It wouldn't be for thorns that I should fail, but rather for flowers by the wayside and the temptation to dally and pluck. Lacking resistance there might lack sufficient impetus, the reaching of the goal would be preordained; I remembered the famous fable of the hare and the turtle. Genius wasn't to be neglected just because it was there; it required the most tender pains. And if the world existed merely for the purpose of informing it, the possessor of this genius possessed also a tremendous responsibility — was under oath not to leave the world suddenly purposeless.

My destiny — more than any — it needed courage to face. I saw then, with an uncannily projected vision, the sacrifices it would demand, and how in the glory of the achievement those sacrifices would seem slight. Nothing could matter, except that I should dance. I went down to my solitary dinner, and my solitude I took for the first offering at the shrine it was ordained that I should worship. It was the circumstance of my pomp. My father's dinner was accompanied perhaps by circumstances quite other — but I had for him or for them no envy.

VIII. SPRINGS

So it came about very simply and naturally that I was to make dancing my profession. I found my father quite taking it for granted, treating it as settled without further argument. But even if this hadn't been so I think that an incident which followed short upon Makaroff's visit would have made my future sure.

I have spoken of my school and said beyond that very little Picked out by my mother from an advertisement about it. in a magazine, it answered most of the purposes of an institution of learning rather better than might have been expected. Beyond that it never meant a great deal to me; I've always felt it a loss that it didn't mean more. Valentine Seymour was away at boarding school, and I suppose that if it hadn't been for Makaroff I should have been there too; as it was I missed Valentine, and my school friendships were of the most casual sort. My teachers seemed to be very ordinary people, and I had as few studies as was compatible with the curriculum. All together my school was a necessary and not wholly unagreeable evil; it never struck me as being particularly desirable until my profane feet were forbidden to sully its sacred doormat.

It was kept by a certain Miss Sheffield, a highly respectable gentlewoman of indefinite years and complexion, who from her raised platform and massive desk surveyed her classes as an officer-of-the-deck surveys the high seas. She

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wore eyeglasses attached to her person by a wonderfully interesting contrivance like a patent tape measure; they were on a chain that at the snap of a spring reeled itself back to a little metal case and left the glasses bobbing at the end as a fly bobs at the end of reeled fish-line. As she wore them merely for reading, when she wished to focus her vision on a distant object she snapped the spring and the chain telescoped itself into its shell in the manner of a turtle's neck.

But unlike the similar phenomenon of the turtle, it was the warning and not the result of danger. At the snap — a sharp small sound — we all would look up wondering, each in our degree and in accord with the clarity of our consciences.

One morning, as I was deep in a lesson which I hoped to avoid taking home, the summons came to me. The snap barely warned me: "May I speak to Rose Carson?"

"Yes, Miss Sheffield."

I walked to the desk, the eyes of the school upon me. Ears strained to hear, but Miss Sheffield addressed me in the skillful low tones of one accustomed to discussing private matters in public. She gave me a preliminary smile and then came straight to the point:—"Is it true, what I have been told, that you are considering adopting the stage as a career—that you are, in fact, thinking of becoming a stage dancer?" Miss Sheffield was nothing if not direct; but there was in her manner, if not in her actual words, a trace of hesitancy—almost as though the words, stage, and dancer were together too much for her delicate tongue.

[&]quot;It's quite true, Miss Sheffield; I'm studying for it now."

[&]quot;It requires study —?"

[&]quot;A great deal."

[&]quot;I trust you will not think me impertinent if I ask if you

have any reason for this course — any motives, mercenary or otherwise?"

"It's the thing I want to do—the thing that interests me—"

She gave me a queer look. "That is in itself so very interesting..." There was a pause laden with import. "It's hardly a matter I can discuss with you — here — "We both waited. I murmured something inaudible.

"When is your mother —" She stopped short and flushed above her paleness. One would have thought mother an even grosser impropriety than dancer. "I beg your pardon, child, I mean your father — when is Mr. Carson at leisure? Is he ever at home in the afternoon, say at five, or perhaps half after?"

"I think so — yes. Would you like to make an appointment with him — to come and see him?"

Miss Sheffield breathed a sigh of relief that her path was made so smooth. "I should like it of all things. There's something," she said, "something I should like to talk over—" It had no visible connection with the profession of dancing.

She came the next day at five-thirty to the stroke and my father was there to meet her. I had arranged it, carrying messages from one to the other, and the waitress had yielded to the persuasions of Katie and brought in tea, which I poured. We all sat about for some time before anything was said. Miss Sheffield laid aside her wraps and drank her tea and nibbled tentatively upon a small sugared cooky. It seemed to be difficult to begin. At last my father asked me to go up to his room and fetch a photograph of our place at Barrington that was lying on the table by his dresser. He was sure

our visitor would like to see it. He had exactly guessed her dearest wish. . . .

"I suppose, Miss Sheffield, that you want to talk to me about Rosie —"

I was beyond the range of his voice, but when I returned with the photograph they were in the very midst. I was greeted at the door — "Rosie, Miss Sheffield doesn't think it's a good idea, your dancing scheme."

"Yes, come in, Rose." The photograph had served its purpose and was laid aside. "I should hardly put it as your father quotes me, but I can't help wondering if you've fully considered its disadvantages?"

"You think there are disadvantages?"

"I've always prided myself on being broad—" The answer struck me as irrelevant.

"Yes," said my father, seriously, "a teacher would have to be."

"Exactly! I'm broad, and yet I can't see how there could possibly be any doubt about the disadvantages of dancing — dancing on the public stage — as a life work. It is, you know, a little extraordinary. One of the very lesser evils would be the social stigma."

"You think that would touch Rosie?"

"She could hardly hope to escape it."

My father was brave. "My dear Miss Sheffield, Rose and I have rather got beyond that point—we've been through the fever and are, in a sense, immune."

Miss Sheffield made a vain effort not to understand what he meant. She looked at us both with an attempt at puzzlement and ended weakly in deprecation. We waited, fully aware that the real object of her visit had not yet seen the light. It came forth suddenly. "Speaking of social stigma—as an example of it which is very present—very germane of the moment—it would, of course, be quite impossible for Rose to stay on with me if she's thinking of becoming a professional dancer."

"You mean she'll have to leave the school?"

"You put it brutally, Mr. Carson."

"I put it in plain English. Of course — she'll leave at once — to-morrow."

Miss Sheffield would have compromised. "Oh — I should never ask her to do that! She might stay until at least the end of the term, when she may perhaps change her mind. And then if she decides after all not to become a dancer — why, I shall be only too happy to take her back in the autumn quite as if nothing had occurred. You see, the matter stands so — she has told some of her little friends at school what her plan is and it's got about. I'm afraid the example would not be a good one for the others — some of the parents might object — and not, if you'll pardon my frankness, without reason!"

"You think my daughter's influence would contaminate the others? Well, I should like to see the others, they must be little painted angels all labeled and dusted in a glass case."

"Sad to say, they're very far from that. And I assure you Rose's influence is everything that's good—it isn't that I have a word to say against. In fact, my own fondness for Rose and my belief in her would lead me to err always on the side of leniency, both in the past and in the future." I detected here a veiled reminder of the magnanimous manner in which she had ignored the divorce—

"The example she might set would be purely in the actual fact of her strange ambition; she might tempt others to do likewise."

Miss Sheffield had finished the statement of her case and her final word was barely out of her mouth when my surprising father must have surprised even himself. "Do likewise? Why, they couldn't do likewise—not if they were tempted till Doomsday! You don't seem to understand that to be a dancer requires a very special talent—a sort of genius—which my daughter fortunately has."

Thus was the paternal sanction given, characteristically under stress.

"I can have nothing more to say. I should be happy to have her continue to the end of the term, and then—"
Then waived me to infinite depths.

My father found her kind, but preferred that I should leave at once. Miss Sheffield took it as a signal for her own departure. We all stood about, finally in the hall, and tried each to outdo the other in an appearance—an exaggeration—of friendliness. Miss Sheffield held me in the very highest esteem—I would be a severe loss to her and to the school—and as for me, the loss was all on my side—my father, also, felt it keenly. We strove to atone any sharpness we might have unwittingly reached.

My father particularly contributed to the amenity of the situation, I had never seen him blander. No one could have thought that his daughter had just been expelled from school, and by the very lady whom he was so gallantly assisting with her coat. It was as if, once having accepted the ugly fact, he put it quite aside and gave all his attention

to his distinguished guest. He helped her with her coat, he had the air of casting petals in the path of her departing feet. He might have been some great baron doing the honors of his castle for some medieval abbess who, having been refreshed from her journey, goes forth again to her sacred pilgrimage. There they were, the man of battle, the woman of religion, meeting across an immeasurable gulf of thought—habit—occupation—instinct. With the woman suppression had attained a point where it was only an appearance of suppression, as there was nothing left to suppress, and the man was like a spring—ever bubbling to the surface—or a bottle of sparkling wine, newly opened.

I had very vividly a sense of my father's beauty — of his being first and foremost a fine figure of a man. He satisfied the eye. Even Miss Sheffield was not altogether insensible to his splendor; I saw her look at him a little dazzled — a look the medieval abbess would have wished to keep for holier things. Yet he was fresh and fine, intensely human in a world which after all is human, big enough to have his sins seem small. As Billy or as William Carson or as the father of genius, or as the great Jupiter himself, he stood straight upon his firmly planted feet. It may be that sulphur is mixed with the excess of iron in the blood, but people of my father's color seem always to burn with a strong fire of life; they're informed with an immense driving force which drives in what they have — beauty or whatever — as a bullet is driven into putty. They come from the North and the struggles of the North to a land that for them flows with milk and honey, their mastery is sure they not so much grasp as grip. But they have also the faults of their qualities. The fire burns quickly according

to its strength, the grasp loosens, the tawny head bends lower than it is ever lifted high. I wouldn't change my own simple paleness and brownness. . . .

My father was like the sun coming through a stained glass window. He stood there in the commonplace New York vestibule of fifteen years ago which was exactly like a thousand other New York vestibules, with its oak bench, its coat rack and little diamond-shaped mirror, its pedestal with a tray for cards, and its floor mosaiced in black and white check — he stood there, and the whole place seemed to be bathed in a flamboyant light. It was at the very end, quite at the door, and after we all had said good-by, that he put Miss Sheffield a final question:—

"Tell me, Miss Sheffield, tell me what is exactly your own personal prejudice against dancing?" He bent to her a confidential ear.

I can't be sure, but I think she breathed the word limbs. "Oh!" her inquirer protested. "Why, it's a well-known fact that women don't have legs, they go on springs."

Miss Sheffield hastened, and it was after she was well down the steps that I was rather abruptly addressed. "By Jove! I believe she does!"

"Does what?"

"Goosy!" And I was chucked under the chin.

But we soon passed to a more serious vein. "So, Rosie, it seems you won't do — you're beyond the pale — you can't be educated — your presence is contaminating."

"There are other schools."

"Yes, but you don't put yourself in that position again. And besides, at a school where they'd be sure not to mind, why, I wouldn't let you go."

"Then you agree with them?"

"Never — never — but it's the world, Rosie, the rotten world, and we must learn to take it as we find it. You've still got me."

One would have thought him then in fact, as he was in spirit, the most devoted, the most exemplary of fathers. He was a tower of strength and honor on which the weak feminine nature might lean forever secure; he was a besieged laird defending his castle from invaders. The sight of him thus strangely brought to my eyes the hot blinding tears; I was filled with an utter weariness of expectancy's tight-rope edge, for a moment — even — I had a weariness of my own famous or infamous genius. I hadn't known before how tired I was; and as I grew to know, the great glory of life blurred to gray. I remember how in spite of my tears I could see the accumulation of dust under a too long unmoved sofa, and it was the last straw on the back of my helplessness. I must have stumbled. I was lifted to my feet by strong supporting arms, and it was still wrapped in the paternal embrace that I at last found speech:—

"Yes, I've got you, and you're all I have—" It came to me, suddenly, a salvation—"but you're big—big." "Rosie—"

The greatest dancer of the coming century laid her head on her father's breast and gave herself to weak feminine weeping. "But you're big — big —" she repeated it over, and assured herself of his bigness with fluttering exploring fingers on his beard and his cheeks and at the back of his head.

IX. UPROOTING

THE next morning I lay in bed luxuriously, and when I at last arose I had my bath and dressed with a magnificent leisure. I lingered over breakfast, read the papers my father hadn't taken down town with him, deliberately loafed away the whole blessed morning. It seemed like Saturday instead of a day in the middle of the week, and yet with a repose which that day lacked, a sense given of an infinitude of leisure — an endless opportunity to play with time. found myself greeting this first day of my exile as I might the beginning of any unexpected holiday; mentally I packed my bag and started forth on a journey which, as it happened, wasn't this time voluntary. I remembered once when a case of diphtheria had appeared in the school and it closed its doors for two weeks, how the scholars went about with their noses cocked high, the envy of the less fortunate. It was a little like that, and then would intrude the remembrance of yesterday's weariness. But I couldn't have been as weary as I had thought; I had wept and dried away my tears, eaten an excellent dinner and — spent with the recent force of my emotion — I had slept as thirteen knows how to sleep. I awoke refreshed, and by noon my stored energies were in a state of such severe compression that I put on my things and went out.

The whole town was mine to choose from, but I picked for an errand the gathering up of my possessions at school.

I wanted to make it clear that I had left, and not to have faced it myself — to have sent Katie with a note — would have been as if I felt disgraced. I went in with what I hoped was a beautiful unconcern, and straight to Miss Sheffield's desk. I bid her good-by before the whole room, and in the glow of the room's interest I found to my surprise that I was exceedingly clever — it was as if I had graduated with high honors instead of having been quite summarily expelled. In the glow of the room's interest my theatrical instinct shone for what it was; I played shamelessly to the gallery, prolonging my farewell beyond all decent bounds and even receiving the august permission to whisper a parting word to my little friends. As I availed myself of that, the hour which was supposed to be sacred to study was disturbed and stirred — for the morning's leisure had been too much for me, I had been seized with an outrageous idea, and I went about among my classmates sowing the seed of a magnificent retaliation. It was directly under Miss Sheffield's superior glasses that I told her pupils one by one — the full reason of my departure, and invited them all to come and judge for themselves of its justice.

They were to come to Makaroff's that afternoon at three and I would dance before them, they would see my sin in all its native flagrancy. I lifted dancing—hitherto at Miss Sheffield's little speculated upon—into the delicious realms of forbidden fruit; I cast about it a romance—a mystery. My friends only lived that the hour of three might come, and in her sublime ignorance the learned lady had thought it would be my staying—not my going—which would for them most emphasize my crime. This last, the carrying out of my outrageous idea, was a crime

indeed; but one outside Miss Sheffield's jurisdiction. In being an outcast I had an outcast's freedom.

I arrived early and warned Makaroff that I had asked one or two school friends to come in and watch our labors. The good man saw nothing strange in that, to him there seemed to be nothing in his establishment to profane the eyes of youth. I went to change my clothes and it was only as I hooked the last hook and fastened the last ribbon that a very excited Makaroff thrust his head in the dressing room door. I had heard the ceaseless tinkle of the bell and I was prepared.

"Mademoiselle — you say you ask one or perhaps two, and they come and come asking for you! My room is full — what is it you are surprising me for — have you given tickets for a performance?" He bristled.

I calmed him — called him *Maestro* and *Cher Monsieur* — told him how I really hadn't meant to take advantage of his good humor.

I could see through the crack he had left in the door Miss Sheffield's school, round-eyed to a man and standing close in a questioning circle. It must have seemed to them amazing, that long shabby room, more amazing than it ever had seemed to me — for I, in some curious predestined way, belonged there, and they came in from the outside. For a moment I saw it with their stranger eyes. They were accustomed to school rooms filled with desks, or the conventional little ball room of a dancing class with its polished checkered floor and gilded chairs set in a row along the side of the wall. That they knew — but this — this dull place, bleak and bare, it had the look of being dedicated to some important and mysterious purpose, had the tense mystery

of an unexplored chamber of horrors. It was like a puzzle with no clew given for its solving. In the end of the room by the windows a large upright piano was set catacornered, and along one wall a practice bar was run about four feet from the floor. To this a little creature with a young body and an old face was fastened by her raised foot with a sort of halter in the manner of a horse fastened by his head in a stable sling. Except for the practice bar and the piano the room was absolutely devoid of furniture, and in the bareness there stood out conspicuously a place where rosin had been ground into the wax and where the mark of sharp heels showed plain.

I let the full wonder of the thing sink in before I went out to the gathering staring group.

The girls were then in a condition receptive for wonder, but the sight of me — their familiar classmate — in a short crepon dancing dress with black tights was too much for them. I was greeted with a very perceptable hush — an utter blank silence — and then some one called my name, "Rose!"

"I'm so glad you could come," I said, and introduced them to Makaroff.

He bowed low as each name was given, and that ceremony completed, went over and unstrapped the little creature by the wall. "You have been stretching enough for to-day, you may go." She obeyed him, lingeringly and curious.

Curiosity was in the air. "Tell me, who is she?" One of my friends nudged me.

[&]quot;She —? She's a pupil of M. Makaroff's."

[&]quot;Is she going to be a dancer, too?"

[&]quot;Indeed she is — a very promising one."

A stifled murmur, half giggle, half speech, went from one to the other.

Makaroff broke in. "I am sorry, young ladies, but I cannot offer you chairs, I am not accustomed to receive so many!"

"Oh — we don't mind — don't think of us."

The class had a sudden access of manners which would surely have gratified their preceptor, had she been there to see. "I hope we're not in the way!"

Makaroff reassured them with some elaboration. There was a sense of waiting for the show to begin.

"If you like," said Makaroff, "you can have your dance first and your exercise after, so we will not detain ze young ladies." He went to the back and called down an entry way. "Mme. Shmidt — Mme. Shmidt — we will have playing now!" Presently an individual who in every particular carried out the promise of her name answered his call. She sat down at the piano and ran unexpectedly skillful fingers over the keys; she ended her run in a crashing chord, and then awaited word from the master. From a corner he brought forth a hitherto unnoticed chair which he proceeded to sit down on. My friends grouped themselves at random and he looked over their untrained poses with a critical eye. "We will first have the Massenet Ballet. Begin!"

I waited in the classic ballet manner while Mme. Shmidt went through with an abbreviated overture, and then, as the music trilled, I took the little stilted run with the leap at the end. From their gaping I might have leapt straight down my spectators' astonished throats.

It is not my intention here to record the technicalities of

the classic dance, such a record would be legible only to the professional eye — an eye rare in this benighted country. But by classic, I don't at all mean the thing which is modernly called Greek. This afternoon at Makaroff's was in the year '94, I think, and that strange revival began some ten years later. I speak, instead, of the classic Italian tradition, a little hard — a little dry — undeniably artificial — and yet the very backbone of dancing. It's the academic as distinguished from the romantic school, and yet on which the romantic must be founded; it's the rhetoric of the dance. It lays down laws and is hedged about with rules. The pure severity of these reminds me of the story of the early Japanese actor whose fame rested on his impersonation of a dragon and his management of that dragon's tail. He knew to a hair the exact wriggle — the exact twitch there were traditions he had never broken. Consequently his fame. . . . But one night his jealous rivals plied him with saki and he made a false move; he was hissed from the theater and had to flee the country. His whole life was ruined. A ballerina who essays the classic dance has for her guidance traditions almost as inviolable as these. I in later years have flown in the face of most of them; but then I danced as I had been taught, my departures were all in the line of my learning. It was a very bare backbone, an unfleshed skeleton, that I gave that afternoon as an example of my deadly sin. It was a dance which needed the glow of footlights and the softening of tulle, a garden of flower buds swaying on their stalks, faces and shoulders and pink flamingo But I gave it straight from the workshop, and lacking the festive glitter, it lacked to the uninitiated any reason but that of the skilled gymnastic exhibition.

My judges were uncomprehending but awestruck.

"Now," said Makaroff, "we will have the tarentelle."

I changed my heelless ballet shoes for slippers with heels.

"Now remember you are a woman, not a whirling dervish!" Makaroff turned to the audience—"Sometimes she forgets—"

The "Tarentella," or as Makaroff said, the tarentelle, takes its name from the spider with which those who dance it are supposed to have been bitten. It's the dance of utter madness — madness of the body — the body's terror in the face of pain, struggle, and final abasement. My heels clacked on the rosined floor, the ivory keys of the piano leapt and shook like rattling bones, the general violence at last communicated itself even to the tips of my outstretched fingers, climax topped climax, all my young strength and the skill that was in me went to a paroxysm of motion. And then the return, like a clock running down, the sinking, the abasement of the body before its master, pain. But the pupils of Miss Sheffield's school didn't have bodies. She had been right to have me leave — I saw her rightness in the staring eyes about me — we were forever separated by footlights. had made my choice, I belonged with the little creature who had been strapped to the practice bar. She had come back into the room and stood apart watching me; she knew, she understood, the others were outsiders. for them — for their ignorance — the healthy professional contempt; I had for them also a certain envy.

My fellow-dancer and I were in the grip of a power; we had sold or hired ourselves to an eternal self-expression; while they, my classmates, were free to be as self-contained as they pleased, they were free to go forth into the sunny

street with nothing between them and splendid irresponsibility but a few simple lessons. They left, reluctant, but still uncomprehending. This reluctance may have had its root in their incomprehension — the puzzle was still unsolved — they had seen the crime for which one of their number had been degraded, and they hadn't seen wherein that crime lay. They had seen me dance and they hadn't even liked it. A very small person indeed, much curled and furbelowed, whose maid Makaroff had requested to wait outside, gave voice to the general impression:—

"My dear, I think it's perfectly wonderful. How do you do it?" I might have been the perpetrator of a clever piece of fancy work. It's a tone I've heard only too often, but my friend in her precocious and imitative youth had the honor of giving it to me first. I stayed on and did my exercises. I told Makaroff about my expulsion and he could see in it only advantage; he had always been jealous of the time I spent at school.

That night I told my father what I had done, how I had lured Miss Sheffield's precious charges to the very foundation of evil under her very nose. He laughed uproariously, but somehow the edge was off my adventure; it hadn't been an entire success; I had a sense of flatness — of anticlimax. My father laughed and then he grew suddenly grave.

"I've been thinking, Rosie."

"Yes —?"

We both waited, and I remember his look at me across the dining table. "I've been thinking." He repeated it slowly. Then came the result of his thoughts. "How soon could you pack your things?"

"But why?"

"Could you pack them by Monday?"

It then was Thursday.

"Why, yes, I suppose I could."

"Good! Because I've been thinking of clearing out—putting all this behind us—making a clean sweep of everything."

It was curious how his thoughts were the very answer to my own unformed ones. "You'd go away for good?"

"For a long time, wouldn't you?"

Our smiles met. "Would I? If I had the chance!"

"Well, you've got the chance—or rather I have. It came to-day. A man I know walked into the office and asked me to engineer a big railroad scheme in England. I'd have my headquarters in London, and you'd be there, and then I'd travel about. I've put Barrington in the hands of an agent, I'm going to sell it; and the lease on this house expires next month. In London you'll find plenty of dancing teachers, and perhaps for the rest we will get a governess. We'll pack our little trunks—see?—and we'll buy our little tickets, and then we'll get out!"

We both laughed for the joy of it.

Suddenly spring had come and Monday was flooded in spring rain. The steamer loomed in it, great black sides rising up out of wetness and bow and stern quite amalgamated with the mist. I went up the gang plank, the brackish river spray full in my face. The decks were slippery; we made straight for our staterooms, and below I had my initiation into the phenomenon I've since learned to associate with sudden changes of base — precipitate flights over unknown seas. I mean the distinctive smell of an ocean steamer — a mixture of plumbing, disinfectants, machinery,

and wet rubber, all faintly neutralized by salt. For the most part I had little time for associations during those last days. When my father decided upon an act, he was unhappy until that act was accomplished; he had made up his mind to go to London, therefore no haste could be too agonizing — too inconvenient. He would return later and gather together the ends that this haste might leave loose, but the great move had to be accomplished at once. cient to say that it was. We had counted our days and we had filled them full — the nights, too; I would hear, as I packed with Katie, the bang of the street door loud in the small hours. And yet there would be the Jovian one, fresh and fine at breakfast, and hurrying off to the arrangement of immense affairs down town. I bid farewell to a quite tearful Makaroff, whose parting blessing was a very grandiloquent letter to a certain Mr. Syms, the man who in London would be best able to guide my fleet steps. I dismantled the town house, sent to Barrington to have our things there boxed and stored, altogether developed an executive ability which I hadn't known I had and which it therefore amused me to use.

On Monday I was ready and I looked about my stateroom, which was next to my father's, with the happy sense of great labors accomplished and a clearness about the future that only could follow a past of which no edges were left rough. I was ready for what might come, and I felt there might come a great deal. Without warning — without the usual long atmosphere of anticipation — I had been uprooted, bodily. All the incidents of my daily life would be made to suffer an entire change. I looked forward. The divorce, the Café Marin, Miss Sheffield's decision, seemed by com-

parison unimportant — were banished to the limbo of small things. After three days of quite thoughtless hurry I had arrived at the sought-after moment when, the responsibility of haste being shifted, I could think and I could listen to the rumble of heavy cargoes that went on overhead; the constant movement past the stateroom door — the scraping of light baggage, and the calling. A box of roses arrived for me from Valentine, who, being at boarding school, couldn't come herself; but her mother, who preferred New York to Montreal, had evidently been appealed to. They never did things by half, the Seymours — their gift filled the stateroom with great green leaves and thorns and scent.

I employed myself in putting away my small belongings in the various ingenious places devised for that purpose. Katie was getting herself settled in the second cabin, and my father had gone to attend to a few last rites. He presently returned with some friends who had come to see him off,—a business partner and another man who was in some way connected with his English railroad scheme. I remember I heard the men laughing as they came down the corridor, and how—as I looked up—I suddenly found them, a laughing, waiting group at my stateroom door. My unpacking seemed to hold their interest. The fact of my uprooting was more than ever emphasized.

X. THE SEA IN SHIPS

As I have gone on with my Big Horse I've encountered, on the whole, less difficulties than I might have feared to I've remembered more and more vividly, I've got at last into a sort of connected narration of events. I've digressed, and much that I've digressed about seems to Mrs. Cassagryer not in any way important; I've been perhaps too frank in certain ways concerning the development of the child mind, I've been in certain places too intimate. But, on the whole, I've pleased myself, and, setting all false modesty aside, I've done what I set out to do better, so far, than I expected to do it. I don't say that it couldn't have been done better still — but all things considered for I am, after all, a dancer and not a writer, and I never before have erred in this manner from my chosen path why, my satisfaction with my accomplishment may not be too unjustified.

But my pleasure is all for what I've done; for what I have yet to do I've nothing but doubt. It's been comparatively easy, — my vivid memories and senses have carried me along, — but now there looms the need of something more, a sense of just proportion, nice and delicate distinctions. I thank Heaven that my narrative is of facts instead of fictions — at least I haven't a plot upon my inexperienced hands. And besides, it may never see the light of judgment — I remind myself of that whenever I wax too blatantly personal. . . . At thirteen I have the way swung clear of hindrances — I am

about to embark over unknown seas. There I am, safe in my stateroom, with Valentine's roses, my necessities of travel, the door open into the entry, the porthole, with its pivot-swung glass showing segments of shipping and water. And up to that point I think I've left out nothing that matters, left in perhaps much that doesn't—even to my mother, divorced and supposedly obscure in the Southern city of her birth.

The door of my stateroom was open, and I've told how my father stopped there and glanced in at me and how with him were friends, one of them a man connected with railroads. I hadn't noticed at first the presence of still a third in the escorting group — he had kept himself in the background rather as if he didn't like to obtrude himself as a part of it — but as I looked up, his head appeared over the shoulders The railroad man, a Mr. Black, explained of the others. him briefly as his son, home for the Easter holidays. saw then he was little more than a boy, barely twenty, I spared him from my task one brief inquiring gaze which he met halfway. I remember him peering at me over his father's shoulder,—he seemed to peer, even though he was tall, — young, meditative, not really shy, but having the good taste to seem so in that maturer company, observing as only the very young have the patience to observe — Valentine's roses didn't escape him, or anything said by the other men, or even the things I was unpacking. He had the air of storing it all away against the need of some precious future.

The men went on to the next room, the boy lingering a moment, and hovering as though uncertain, but finally casting his lot with theirs. As he went he flashed back at me what might have been the prelude of an address thought better of.

Presently I heard the hiss of a siphon. My father's business partner, one McMire, a domestic little man, who always made a point of being friends with children, came back to me with a glass in his hand. "Well, Miss Rose, well—so you're going to be a dancer—?"

This required no reply, and I continued my search for a place on which to lay the hat I had lately taken off.

He forgave my silence and held his tumbler high. "Well—here's hoping you'll be as fine a dancer as your father is a bridge builder!" He called through: "You know, Carson, I think it's bully of you to let her do it—most fathers wouldn't—"

"Oh, if you talk about 'let,' it's plain you don't know Rosie."

I remember young Black's gleam of interest. The curtain in the doorway between the two rooms had been drawn aside, and again we regarded each other.

"Do you lead him a life?" McMire asked of me.

"I don't know, I'm sure —"

The elder Black entered the arena. "I suppose you hardly lead him as much of a life as this boy of mine leads me—that's pretty bad, you know—"

My father presumed that it was a close thing between us. "Frightful —" I said.

And Mr. Black agreed, "Frightful -"

Young Black became for the first time audible. "I suppose it isn't really as frightful as our fathers make it out, you know. But I wouldn't place yourself in my class if I were you. The reason I'm intruding myself here now is that my father won't let me go about alone — he's only this moment got me out of a frightful scrape. I sent for him

last night, but he wouldn't come; and now he swears he won't have me out of his sight."

The young man had kept silence long, but what he said was surely worth waiting for. He had his instant effect. It was a speech I think we none of us wholly fathomed, so we all smiled, even his cautious parent, whose smile had as well a playing undercurrent which wasn't mirth. Mr. Black looked at his son, who in turn looked at him, himself smiling. Defiance was in the air — defeat and triumph. I felt myself to be curiously concerned with it.

The men went on to talk among themselves of the venture in London, the young one content to rest upon his laurels, and presently McMire and the Blacks took their departure.

"Is Mr. Black's son very bad?" I asked as soon as his iniquitous young back was turned.

"I haven't an idea." My father was obviously occupied with more important issues. At last he came to a sense of my question. "Why, I believe he is! It seems to me I've heard that Black's had a time with him - expelled from school — all that sort of thing — and I guess for a damn sight worse reasons than you were. I think he must be at college now. That was rather uncalled for, what he said to us; it could hardly have been, I suppose, in the nature of a jest. He seemed — outside that — a well-mannered youngster — called us all 'sir' and shook hands properly. You can't depend on that light, blue-eyed sort — they look like babies and know a lot besides. If what he said was true, his father took it very decently. If any son of mine gave himself away like that, he wouldn't forget it in a hurry! Still — he is too big to lick. Tell me, did he strike you as being bad?"

"No, he struck me as being particularly lovely!"

"Whatever you may mean by that. I sometimes wonder if the things you say are meant as jests — or what. The things that go on in your busy little brain — I sometimes wonder about them —"

I wonder myself. On the clear, sensitive slate of my wonderment — rather let me say of my experience — young Black was the first to have written. That he wrote unconscious of his act made me none the less occupied with the event. I was filled with it, as I had been filled at the Café Marin, but there I had been at best but a sympathetic spectator; my concern then had been for that which was in a sense no concern of mine. And here I strangely knew that the concern was mine, however passingly, however unconsciously, the light eyes had taken me into account, not as a child, but as an equal, — had placed me generically with women. Young Black had stood in my doorway and that innocent threshold had been, if not profaned, initiated. My little painted walls seemed still to hold the rich echo of his voice, for he had confided to me his sins; he had looked not only upon me, but upon the sacred results of my unpacking — the look seemed still to linger, hovering among chiffons. He had been there in all the insolence of his youth and of his sex, and had left behind him, subtly, the marks of his sojourn.

My father suggested that we go on deck, the better to watch the actual moment of sailing. Whistles were being blown, and bands played. On the lower deck a large steerage, hysterical after the manner of the unenlightened, huddled and shuffled like herded cattle; on the upper people breathed tearful farewells. There seemed everywhere an excess of rather forced emotion. Even the gayety, the sort of happy casualness, of the more accustomed travelers had an exaggerated note; they went about their business of departure, their sorting of steamer chairs and settling of baggage, with an artificial nonchalance. The mist had cleared away a little and one saw through it dimly the strained upturned faces of the people on the dock — one saw the ugly outlines of the shipping buildings and beyond — bulky and looming — canvass-covered bales of merchandise.

"We're off, Rosie!" said a voice at my side. There came a quiver of birth, and the steamer moved out slowly, irrecoverably.

That voyage lives for me in a series of impressions. remember the sunlight gleaming through the fog, the long slanting stretch of decks swept damp with rain, the throbbing of the screws, the sense of motion never ending, and the waters swirling past when I lay awake at night. I had my chair carried up to the hurricane deck, and I used to lie there with nothing between me and the sky but the upper rims of the life boats hanging in the davits, and below I could see brokenly the rim of the sea like the rim of a blue Chinese saucer. Sometimes I would go forward and stand as near as I could to the bow. I sailed into the sunlight, cutting a path through the salt spray, I was a second Jason in quest of the golden fleece, which lay back of the sun upon a wrought charger of molten silver. Sometimes there was no sun, but leaden skies reflected in leaden seas. Then would come a day so light and still that there was no darkness except the black smoke from the funnels and no sound but the ripple and gurgle past the ship's side. My blood ran through my veins free like air, my head was light, too, and filled with the long thoughts of youth. I was Jason in quest of the golden fleece,

a pirate harrying the Spanish Main, the commander of a fleet of war. The bugle blown by the steward at one and again at six was the call to arms, it seemed to me that I heard the boom of great guns and saw the flash of metal, I knew the loose blouses of the sailors bulged with weapons, and their eyes seemed to gleam with memories of pillage and blood.

I look back now to things which have since grown common and see them in all the investing wonder of youth. In thinking of the sea I think, not of my regular contemporary view of it, the two voyages I make in the course of every year, but of that first voyage — that first view. The later ones are at their best all mixed with that. Now the realities come too close, played about by too much imagination they crowd each other too hard, there isn't time. But in youth there's an eternity of time. In my leisure I could see, over and over, the young man standing in my doorway, the blue rim of the sea, the great dining saloon always slanting and the diners foreshortened to one's vision like people on a hillside. I could hear — and I still can hear — the orchestra as it drowned the clatter of dishes with strident and popular melody. I remember the hurrying of stewards, the laughter from the men's smoking room that sounded deep for the space of the opening and shutting of a door, and in rough weather the swathed prostrate figures of voyagers who had succumbed utterly to upheaval — had reached a point that was without deception and without shame.

But for me the days were all set to a divine measure; time was eternal, I squandered it in dreams; and then across the face of my dreams there swept something defining itself at first merely as an irregularity in the blue horizon

THE SEA IN SHIPS

line, a line of denser blue stretching straight instead of curved and growing as one watched, thickening to paler blues beyond and scattering and spreading to other lines which had seemed at first to be low-lying mist, and proved instead to be the Irish coast.

XI. BACKWATERS

In London we took lodgings in the doubtfully fashionable but nevertheless central neighborhood of Portland Place. Our quarters consisted of a sitting room, three bedrooms and a rather primitive bathroom and constituted the entire second story of a roomy old-fashioned house. Our meals were provided by the landlady and served in our rooms by Katie who flourished tremendously in her native kingdom. We lived there for close on four years. We didn't intend to at first, but we found ourselves staying on; the railroad scheme prospered and other schemes were born of it; Mr. Syms proved a teacher worthy of my steel; all together London was suited to our purpose. Gradually the lodgings near Portland Place took on an aspect of home, we sent for things, my father made fleeting journeys across the water and always returned laden, I had my books from Barrington and what other possessions we could house. There came a time when it was hard to imagine we had ever lived anywhere else.

In a sense those years in London have been the happiest, and I know they've been the quietest, of my life. For that very reason they are the most difficult to write about. You can't set a finger upon the quality of happiness; you can't say, there it is, or there; you can't pick out incidents when what incidents there were had the beautiful habit of toning in with the surrounding background. I had peace and work and my unquiet soul folded tired wings. My memories of this time are less vivid than usual, it's as if they were en-

veloped by the gray haze which I loved as I loved everything that was of London. I found in that love the sort of happiness which some women find in marriage, I had rest and growth as some women have it in a man's arms. I loved London and was rewarded by a disclosing of ever fresh wonders, an unfolding of beauties; and yet I had always the sense of familiarity, it seemed that I had known it always—the feel of life all close about me, the civilization deeprooted in the ages, the great city's gamut of moods from grimness to laughter.

There were the houses in Park Lane, each one a law unto itself, the massive stone and the more frivolous brick which in season blossomed gay with window boxes. There was Buckingham Palace, the temporal home of kings, and Westminster Abbey, their final resting place — near by the Houses of Parliament, rising grim and gaunt, and the Thames crawling under bridges, and then yet more bridges until finally bridgeless it went on unimpeded in its course to the sea. There was the great windowless Bank with its guarded courtyard; you could fancy the jingle of golden sovereigns, the visible expression — the solid assurance — of England's wealth. You fancied it stacked in glittering piles and carried in sacks according to immemorial custom. . . .

I sit here now at my window that overlooks the Square and I try to give semblance to something which has become — which always has been — so familiar a thing that it is like trying to describe myself. I live here in New York for practical human reasons which I'm too weak to surmount, I have ties I can't break, but I go back every year to the city of my love as to a great soothing presence, I immerse myself in its healing waters — I do not speak of the muddy

Thames — and now in writing of it I'm homesick. I try to imagine Washington Square a bit of the Green Park, and as a hansom drives by I listen vainly for the sound of its bell. New York has risen to stupendous heights by stupendous human effort, but London has risen by the aid of forces too great and too varied, I think, for poor humanity to wholly reckon. London reaches straight back through the centuries, through war and fire and pestilence; it has molded the elements which have gone to make it — marked them with its own brand — instead of being itself molded and marked. New York is stupendous, a civilization overlaying virgin stretches, and with its past a mere thing of yesterday — I think so of the city of my childhood — and its future ever imminent, ever prominent, its present is nevertheless extraordinary. But London is a great fact of nature.

As I say, the years when I lived there are very difficult to give with any clearness, they were so full, so happy, and so quiet. I studied with Syms, walking to and from my lessons, accompanied by Katie — for London is not a place where the young go unprotected — I spent many days in the British Museum, I attended lectures of all sorts, dealing with many subjects of the hour from "The Origin of Man" to the "Disadvantages of Home Rule." We never carried out our original intention of having a governess; it didn't seem as though there would be time for such a person, my life was filled without her, and finally through the courtesy of some business friend of my father's it was arranged that I join a class which met for a couple of hours three times a week at the houses of its various members. It gave me the society of girls of my own age and was in every way desirable. I remember that class; the dozen or so English girls, — formed

like women, dressed like children, — the little mincing teacher from whom I can never disassociate the word gentlewoman, she was one — the fact hardly required her reiteration so were we all. I remember the tea consumed at the close of our sessions, great cups of it and slices of bread and butter, and at some houses toast and jam. One of our number was a daughter of Sir Frederick Pomfret, and there—as well as at my own house — we always had two kinds of jam and cake. I'm afraid I remember this material side better than I do our studies, which were History, Literature, and the Modern World — we took them in turn, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. History I frankly don't remember at all, Literature began with Chaucer and never got beyond Addison's "Spectator," and the Modern World was a curious mixture of political economy, devotion to the Queen, and the effect upon it — upon the world, I mean — of the invention of the telegraph.

But we were made to feel that there were many things in History, Literature, and even in the Modern World which we would be better off without — which, in fact, it was outside Miss Cholmondeley's province (pronounced Chumley) to teach us. It was I who unearthed the profound belief that many of these things Miss Cholmondeley herself didn't know. There was that which her scholarship had never compassed, and that which her position as a gentlewoman forbade her. Base whispers went on behind her back; the class didn't feel their gentleness so binding. At Sir Frederick's the second housemaid had been seen to kiss the baker's boy, the class hummed, the baker's boy was the special property of Sir Frederick's daughter, she flirted with him from her window in the morning when he brought the rolls. Another

of our precious lot had many errands in a draper's shop in the next block, — there was a young shop-assistant, — her governess didn't mind, because the governess — I think the shop contained for her also some particular interest.

And all this went on basely in the half light of concealment. It seemed that life was divided into two parts, —that which was picked for our consumption — selected and brought to our polite notice by the Miss Cholmondeleys of the world and that part which was concealed and which we ourselves concealed, the vast undercurrent of which for us the visible sign was the kiss of a baker's boy and a housemaid. There was much that we saw thus, as it were chastely, from the other side of the fence. It might have been better, I think, and saved us a prolonged gaze, if for a while the fence had been removed and we could have seen our fill; it might have improved our thought and talk. . . . I seem to include myself in all this — I say, we and us — but in reality I held myself apart. It wasn't, as my companions thought, that I was too innocent, I was too wise — I knew. And because for me perhaps the fence I use to point my moral had been, as I would suggest, removed, the whisperings and the concealments left me cold. I had seen something of love in its fulfillment — had lived in the same house, understandingly, with two people who knew what love was — I had nothing but scorn for the vapid imaginations of schoolgirls.

I had had a reaction from my first flare of consciousness, the other sex as a sex meant nothing to me. It stared at me in the street, told me with its eyes that I was a desirable feminine person, in the form of Sir Frederick Pomfret it chucked me under the chin, and collectively and youthfully it left illiterate verses in my mail box. These last were

mostly the brothers — they came home at the ends of terms at institutions of learning and lingered on the stairs or came into the classroom preoccupied with the mislaying of a book. In the latter years some of them struggled with beards, flaunted manly pipes; one noted sometimes a strained adolescence, sometimes a precocious maturity, and some of them were merely fresh and young and charming. I remember one, not to be counted among the latter, who pursued me with a sedulity worthy of a nobler cause. Back of his pursuit and pricking him to the chase was a cold curiosity, rarely expressing itself in words, but rather in a baffled gaze — little seams of calculation at the eye corners — it might be, one thought, a curiosity reaching to tumult.

But I was, as I said, proof against pursuit. I had been in ways premature and I now reaped the harvest of my haste; I looked on calm while the youth about me was a-twitter with the season of its spring. I had all my strength for growth, my processes of development went on untroubled, I found myself at the threshold of womanhood hardly knowing how I had come. There is a photograph taken when I was about sixteen to which I now attach an absurd value just because it then had none. Now my photographs, my looks, have become mere professional assets, their value is definite in dollars and cents; I see them framed large in show windows; I'm "taken" for nothing as a mere proof of skill —a trademark — I catch again and again the trained poses which are recognized as mine. I often feel that my very individuality has been copyrighted and commercialized. But at sixteen I belonged to myself. I stand against a folded velvet curtain which seems to have barely closed upon my passing; I look straight out with the eyes that give me a sort of accent

downwards, my brows are arched and the bridge of nose set high, the oval of cheek is smooth and the trained body lightly hung, from the poised little head to the slipper tip that peeps from the hem of my gown. But the thing that I now see is youth, still unmarked for all the light pains it had suffered and all the light knowledge it had lived through, still with its path fresh to its feet — I see it, I see it in my dreams, and the unsmiling, inscrutable young mouth. . . .

A great deal of the time Katie and I had Portland Place to ourselves. His work took my father far afield, and there were whole weeks and months when I hardly saw him at all. used London as a base, his work went out from it like spokes from an axis; I imagined him netting all England in rails. I suppose that in London too there were ladies who called him Billy; but the echo of their steps was less clear. The silences of Portland Place, the frequent emptiness of my father's room, gave a very different suggestion from the wanton unrest of earlier years. Then, in New York, our life had been carried on with a sort of feverish speed which gives me now the etymology of a certain perverted definition of the word; there had been a clatter and moments of ominous quiet, the most innocent departures might take on a meaning strange to them. But now it was as if the house of Carson had attained to dignity. I wished that my mother could have been there to taste its flavor.

I used to sit in my room, with the windows that looked out to a fascinating irregularity of London backs — I used to sit and wonder if she had a place to sit which was half as good. I would draw a chair to the fire and balance my outstretched toes on the fender whose brass walls sent forth reflected gleams of firelight; Katie would light the lamp and pull the

curtains tight — shutting out the London backs — and I would see through the door she had left open the cheerful order of the sitting-room beyond. And with it all — the order and the peace and the sort of safety of it — there would come a longing for that disturbing presence. My fancy took long flights; I heard my mother's voice in the voices of the city dusk, her shadow was among the shadows on the wall, it was her foot that had kicked the corner of the rug awry and her hand that had moved the brushes on the dresser, and in the fire her soul that flickered on the tip of flame. I wondered who lived in the house she had so long marked as hers; whether the jolly wallpaper of roses peeping through a trellis had been replaced by a chaster pattern, and if the woman who had picked it out had hair which grew back from her temples in great sweeping waves.

Gradually the atmosphere of Portland Place sank in, as you might say. And gradually my thought of my mother came to be like the thought of some one who had paid a brief visit in the far past, come for a space, a jesting visitor from a foreign shore, bringing strange looks and strange customs, and folding for a time the great pinions she had afterwards stretched in flight. The long years of turmoil fell away; there was much I forgot. People do that,—forget and then remember again afterwards.

When I joined Miss Cholmondeley's class, my father warned me that I should have to be very careful; its members had been brought up rather differently from me, more quietly, more — well, damn it all! more respectably. They were representative of the upper middle class, daughters of men who were in what is called the "city"; prosperous business men — Sir Frederick's was a "city" title. They

were particular about their daughters, more particular than the aristocracy, — who my father imagined to be a bad lot, -and it would be as well not to say too much about dancing, for instance; one didn't want another Sheffield experience. I exceeded my instructions; I was careful to a degree. I hope I've already made it clear, I had niceties of thought and speech to which Miss Cholmondeley's class couldn't possibly aspire; I drew lines; I refused to discuss baker's boys, sometimes I refused to discuss anything. It was, if you like, priggishness, but I should prefer to call it egotism. I found my own meditations more profitable than the lubricities of my companions; I'm free to say I wasn't popular. But if I had been popular, then I probably shouldn't be so now, and my popularity now has a value. It was as well that I didn't waste my youth, that my attention was all for Mr. Syms, the little English ballet master.

I had taken him Makaroff's letter, the enthusiasm of which he had seemed immediately to discount by asking me if I was the young lady referred to. I remember him, little cockney that he was, — with all the misdoubt, the want of faith, bred of cockneyism, — looking me over from top to toe and tapping my passport with a curved forefinger. "So you're Miss Rose Carson? 'Ave you done anything on the boards in America? You know they're less critical over there."

I explained that I hadn't.

[&]quot;But you expect to?"

[&]quot;Oh, yes."

[&]quot;It's surprisin'," said Mr. Syms, "how many there are who expect to do somethin'. Sometimes they do and more often they don't, but we'll give you a try-out. If a little bit of wot 'e says is true, why, you'll do very well!"

It was under these none too favorable auspices that the guidance of Syms was begun. He showed, I think, the way how not to greet a prospective pupil. But we both recovered. Our connection has worked so greatly for our mutual benefit that we're both quite willing to forget any preliminary lacks. He has made me, and I, in turn, have done the same for him. And yet through it all our relations have been characterized by this same impersonal quality; personalities haven't mattered to us; we've had other things to think about. To this day I know very little of Syms, the man, except that he's married and his wife lives in Ealing. He once mentioned his wife to me and her abode, neither of which his prosperity has altered. A knowledge of the dance happened to be superimposed upon an otherwise commonplace intellect; it's a gift with Syms as much as though a fairy godmother had waved a wand. He had the gift, and with it the physique of a London shopman, and for dancing he was the wrong sex; then I came, and he did with me what he couldn't do with himself. My gift, — I feel almost as if I had turned it over wholly to him. Though there are people who would have it that I am merely Syms's interpreter; that he stands figuratively — in the wings and directs it all. discuss it? We both know what we've done for each other.

Makaroff's knowledge of dancing had come down to him from generations: his mother was a premiere danseuse in St. Petersburg, his father was ballet master at the opera house there; it was bred in his bone,—a sort of divine right of kings. But Syms's knowledge went deeper than that; I imagine him—though I know nothing—running away from a thoroughly non-dancing family, perhaps joining a circus, and

later by his father's death coming into a sum of money which enabled him still further to pursue his soul's love. All this is fiction, for of the man's life I know nothing. But I know that he had traveled over three continents, — the money would account for that, — everywhere scenting the dance as a hunting dog scents game; everywhere worming it out, from Moscow to Calcutta. I know that he had a singleness of purpose, that he saw the world only on its toe tips. was much of pleasure and of profit which must have escaped him utterly. He'd been in Algiers, Tunis, Alexandria, Cairo, along the Red Sea to Suakim; he found them dancing at Berbera on the British Somali coast. He'd been up into Arabia, through to Persia and Teheran, then to Kabul and down into India from Peshawa to Amritsar, Delhi, Lucknow, Benares, Calcutta, and back across the continent to Bombay. He had entered — the Muse of Terpsichore knew how — the palaces of Rajahs and seen what is hidden from western eyes, seen the nautch dances which last till dawn. "The presents those girls get - jewels like hen's eggs, rubies, emeralds —" His cockney soul could understand that, it was one of the few things I ever heard him tell not directly connected with his great aim.

"But they deserve 'em, the good ones. It's as if their very bones were oiled; they've more joints than we have; they ripple—so—but I can't. . . ." He had seen the nautches in Bow Bazaar, and at Constantinople penetrated the holy of holies to where the true whirling dervishes worship their God. Besides the Balkan States he'd done Poland and Russia, not only the large cities but the great country of the Slav, where the dance is a barbaric festival. He had

stayed for months, of course, in the comparative civilization of Milan; but for the most part he found Italy barren to his purpose. Spain he had made his own.

He'd crossed his slim legs under café tables from Barcelona to Seville and Valencia to Lisbon. He must have had adventures. I got the faint whiff of one once. . . . He had a curious slanting scar across his forehead, and when he grew red from dancing, it shone livid. I asked him about it without quite realizing at the time what an intrusion the question was upon our impersonality. He answered me — much in the same way — without realizing. "How did I get it? A girl in Seville. A long black skirt she wore, I remember, with a train; she danced on the table for an hour, and you never saw her feet once. It was wonderful — wonderful —" A cold, professional Syms was it, with the scar — or what?

His studio in Great Queen Street was filled with the trophies of his hunting. There were scarfs, banded with metal, that hung heavy and then circled like a hoop with the impetus of motion; there were sandals from the south to stand empty and waiting while the bare feet quickened, and heavy wooden clogs to sound sharp on the ground. He had musical instruments, cymbals and gongs and tambours; he could make play with those, but the stringed pieces reproached him mutely. There was a cithern whose strings were of wire; I've seen him take it down from the wall and pick at it, groping as if in some tentative imperfect communion with a shy spirit. "I got that off a man that lived about five miles out from Warsaw; 'arf a crown in our money and cheap at that—"

Over Syms's mantelpiece there hung an enlargement from

a camera snapshot, presenting him in the immemorial pose of the tourist: knickerbockers, pith helmet, swinging field glasses; before him the desert, behind him the great shadowing sphinx. His genius was like that, infinitely greater than himself; Syms the man seemed to profane it, to stand not only in its presence but in its way. His genius understood beauty,—the beauty of form, color, motion; his manhood went uncleanly with unbrushed garments, questionable linen, and a profusion of cheap cologne. Prosperity brought sleekness and a taste in waistcoats. But what does it matter, even an aitch more or less?

I met him one day walking along the Embankment near Somerset House. He was looking up at the high gray walls to where two men were cleaning windows. They crawled on the ledge and brandished mops heavenward; he watched them with an absorption which could only have been induced by the great aim, and greeted me with the fog of it still thick about him:—

"Miss Rose — well — well — I was thinkin' why not have somethin' like that along the back drop? Somethin' movin'. Why confine yourself to the one level? Ever see people in a grand stand? It would be like that, — up and up, — only thinned out and movin'. Have the stage closed in by steps, — a sort of graduated platform, — and just a few figgers, here and there, paler and grayer than the figgers on the floor, following the dance, only slower, catching a pose and holdin' it and then another and another! Why, you'd have the 'ole thing marked out plain like the separate pictures they feed into a cinemetograph, and then all at once you'd go! Slow at first and then faster. . . . You'd have perspective, do you see? It would be flat like a can-

vas." He stood, frankly staring. "That's it—crawl—move! My God!—" His expletive was from the excitement of his soul. I saw him in the attitude of a man at a fire; my gaze fell lingeringly on the back of his abominable overcoat.

XII. OPEN ROAD

MR. ETHELBERT SYMS
has the honor to present
Rose Carson, Dancer,
in a series of matinees beginning
March 15 at 3 p.m.
at the
Great Colony Theater

It faced me in the theatrical column of the *Times*. I read it through, word by word. I felt suddenly weak, and as I leaned back I seemed to wilt into my chair. My realization of Rose Carson, as a dancer, had come to me as it never had done before. I stood convicted before the world; it was written in flaming letters. The *Times* broadcast,—every paper in London,—I fancied the whole city informed. It was I—I—who would dance on March 15 at the theater on the Strand. Three days off it was, and now they had tickets for sale. My own most intimate self in pieces for ten shillings; years of labor, flashes, insights, the genius of Syms, the alchemy of the studio in Great Queen Street. There was a sign outside the theater, later I should pass it; my embarkation would be complete.

I remember all that went before: my father's reluctance, the insistence of Syms, and at last this final compromise. For the matinees were an arrangement by which I was to appear in public, and yet be saved the indiscriminate associations of the stage; I shouldn't, as it were, burn all my bridges behind me. Through professional connections of Syms I had received an offer from a second-rate music hall manager to appear at one of the lesser theaters, or "halls," as they are called; I was to give two performances a day, find my own costumes and music, and receive a wholly nominal remuneration. My engagement was for one week, and if I made a success the management would have the privilege of renewing my contract on the same terms. It didn't seem a great thing, but Syms had worked hard for it, and he brought me the news of it, all aglow with triumph. It would only be for me to show what I could do. . . . And then came the resounding descent of the paternal foot. Rosie might be going to be a dancer, but she wasn't going to be one in quite that manner — under quite those auspices — make herself part of a disreputable show in a disreputable part of town — kick her heels in the air for every drunken sailor who had a shilling and every painted trull who had a Johnny; neither was she going to hobnob with a lot of filthy, unspeakable people behind the scenes, be brought into indecent intimacy with women whose very existence was an affront to her and men who were even worse — no, and again, no! He'd not been born yesterday, had my father; not for nothing had he been a dweller in cities for more years than he cared to count.

Syms thought he put it rather strong about the stage—
(I haven't quoted him at length)—it really wasn't as bad as that. And this was an opportunity at which thousands of prospective dancers would have jumped. But there was, of course, nothing to be done if Mr. Carson felt like that.

Yet the battle wasn't over; there was another of those weighty conferences with which my upbringing was dotted,—this time at my father's office,—and the upshot of it was the hiring of a fashionable West End theater for the series of matinees in question. The enterprise would be conducted under Syms's name and management, the financial backing would be my father's. It was magnificent, a splendid capitulation worthy of the flaming beard.

"The flipper says you can dance, Rosie,"—he always called Syms "the flipper";— "he says you can dance, and you won't dance any better than you do now until you've had the actual experience. So—I've never stood in your way, have I, Rosie, about anything? And I'm not going to do so now."

I had offered to pay out of my own money, but he wouldn't hear of it; he would do the thing himself and do it handsomely.

It's without my province here to give, word for word and day for day, an account of the preparation and the work entailed by our scheme. There was a mass of technical detail which concerned Syms more than it did me. Struggles with mechanics, electricians, misunderstandings with costumers, difficulties about musicians. The whole thing came near to being wrecked by a seeming lack of men in London who could play the guitar, but Syms throve on obstacles; they fell before his triumphal progress. His talents had never before been given their full scope. The minor positions he had held, the lessons he had given — what were they? Now, in his direction of my dances, he recognized the shy knock of Fortune at his door. "Mr. Ethelbert Syms has the honor to present —" Mr. Syms would show the world of

dance a new trick or so, he would say — through me, his chosen medium — a few of the things which it had long been pent up in his soul to say. He had the strained calm of a man whose fruition is very near. I came to the thing which every woman finds when her path leads her among men, I found myself — whom one would have thought in this case all-important — to be merely a factor in the great aim, and lucky to be even as close to it as that. I was inadequate — utterly. And perhaps it was as well that the exigency of my own need was lost in the exigency of Syms. If I failed, I would fail him, and if I succeeded, it would be for him — it made it not matter so much.

It wasn't until I saw my own name large in print—
"Rose Carson, Dancer"—that I had a returning consciousness of worth. It came to me then that it was I, not Syms, who would dance at the Great Colony Theater, on March 15 at three o'clock, and who would, by that act, go forth upon the great open road of publicity. It was I, not Syms, who would dance there, solitary in the vastness, and the power would be mine, not his. As I have said, I went weak with the thought of it.

I have said that Syms had a strained calm. The morning of the performance the strain broke. There was some question of lighting still unsettled, and we had the stage for one last rehearsal. Syms, I remember, was standing in the center of it, shouting to the calcium man in the gallery; things wouldn't go right, something was the matter with the calciums, the light wavered and shifted and then became fixed upon a point in the front of the house; Syms still shouted, and the empty theater gave back the echo of his voice. Suddenly he crossed over to the left where I was posing some draperies.

For no apparent reason he went quite to pieces; he lost his temper, he became a little bullying cockney, aitches were strewn, I got the effect of being sworn at:—

"Look 'ere! You're not goin' back on me now? You'll 'ave to dance, you will — dance as you never danced before — d'ye 'ear me?" He waved his hand out towards the bare rows of seats. "You'll find it very different when there's people out there — very different. Now you can gallavant round to your heart's content without a soul to see you do it except me, and I don't count — but then — Say, hif you 'ave a fright, wot will I do? Hanswer me that!" He glowered; the very impersonality of his interest in me had reached to rudeness. "Wot will I do — hey?"

It seemed more a question of what I myself would do. I asked him how he knew that there would be people out there—he had for it the record of the box office receipts,—some fifty tickets had been sold. "That's worse than none," said Syms; "you see 'em scattered. But it don't matter to you. Your father's puttin' up the money and 'ee don't care, and if 'ee don't care, why, who does? 'Ee's a gentleman!" Syms himself most obviously wasn't; but he brought his statement out with an emphasis bred of a race of classes, a race of shopkeepers. My father's liberality had created an immense impression.

I went home for lunch and a brief rest before I should have to return to the fight. I lay down on the outside of my bed, pulling over me for cover a quilted robe I had, and drawing the curtains to veil the light. For it was one of those rare days in London when the sun is clear and the sky a great blue heaven, towards which steeples and towers reach in vain, the puddles of the last shower gleam prismatic, and gray

walls stand black in the glare. I was benumbed with the suspense which was now nearly at an end. I felt that I had come to a great turning point; that I might emerge from my experience the victim of strange changes. I took at last to counting the hours—four—three—two; I had two hours of life, and then, after that I didn't know. . . . I swung between blindness and a too great intensity of vision.

I was benumbed, and yet somehow at three o'clock I should dance; my surety of that was the straw to which I clung. I would come forth, solitary in the vastness, black and gold against a scarlet background of draperies hung like the plaited velvet lining of a jewel box. Very small I should be, very much at the bottom of the canvas, an effect about me. of waste and unfilled spaces, vistas of scarlet folds. trick that's been done again and again, and its doing has finally lost it its mystery; but Syms was the first. Syms also belongs the golden light, nebulous like a misty sunset. His is the music hidden in the wings, that calls forth at last the bewitched spirit of itself, visible. There would be a great labor as of birth, the violins contending with each other for the ultimate throe, and then from the midst of sound would come its visible emanation, very still, — a spirit invoked, — which with a shiver of life or pain is invoked again by rhythm. The music mould be drowned by the dance, would sink to a mutter, scanned and accented by the rattle of castanets.

Spread on a chair was the dress I should wear first; in its curves and folds and stiff-wired lengths, its delicate arteries of framework, it had an entity — almost an animation — of its own. The gold of it shimmered, and the long black stripes came to eyes like the eyes on a moth's wing; its

ruffles of gauze were overlaid by closer weaves, and there were spangles of green and blue where the eyes were circled. The fact of that dress was sure — sure as the fact of three o'clock; but I must have for a while lost my consciousness of either, for the next fact I knew was that of Katie standing at the foot of my bed and telling me to get up. We drove to the theater in a cab; I dressed there. Three o'clock came, and after it delays through which the hour seemed to wait. . . .

I was bathed in light, served up as on a platter to a gaze that seemed to meet me from every direction at once. I saw faces, my father's and the small red face of Syms, and dimly other faces that were unfamiliar, the occasional light dresses of women, and then a darkness of empty seats. I stirred when I should have been still, and there came to me the faint but mistaken clapping of gloved hands. Sarasati's music think for me, I had no will of my own; mechanically I raised my arms and slowly brought them down as the rhythm rounded, slowly swayed till the whole body curved. My limbs were heavy with the sleep I'd waked from, but as the tune quickened they grew light as the glare in which I danced. I still had the sense of being served up to the public gaze; it held me, relentless; no part of me escaped. I was held and I was impelled to an effort greater than I had ever made in the comparative seclusion of four walls; it was for the lack of the fourth wall that I danced, blindly in a fog of light, and yet I saw the dim scattered faces, my father's and Syms's and the rest.

I stopped; there came again the faint gloved applause. I noticed that Syms had gone from his seat, and that my father was mopping his brow with his handkerchief; he seemed to be laboring under a stress. I heard Syms in the

wings speaking to the musicians. I danced again; this time a fluttering moth, reaching to flights and sinking. After that I changed my black and gold for a dress all black, long and plain with scarlet poinsettias at the bodice. I was on the stage as the curtain rose, and back of me two Spaniards with guitars. I danced the *Gitana*.

The choice was Syms's. He defended its oddness; it was just because I was sixteen, my youth and my freshness were the very points. In Seville, at the Café Suizo, a Gitana was danced by children, their being children was the final note! — their being innocent. Syms was innocent, too, at least ruthless, — when dancing was in question. and turned in my long black dress, as my heels beat turning back upon myself like a kitten in chase of its tail; I beckoned and glittered. I must have had a sort of slim, fleshly glory. I know now. I was becoming accustomed to the absent fourth wall; I was less conscious of my watchers, yet I still could see my father, — and was aware that he wasn't liking it, — I could see Syms, a man looking at his own, and the unfamiliar faces. I brought my hands down over my own face in a gesture of the dance. I came forward and again forward till I stood in the curve of the footlights, the guitars buzzed, the curtain went down. It rose to an applause which was, if not louder than before, sharper. I stood there, straight and hard, my hands clenched, my arms out-Syms was right, — my youth and my freshness were the very points; there was in that forced mimicking wisdom a true Spanish brutality. It is a quality I've tried to reproduce in my later renderings of the dance; I'm becoming as ruthless as my preceptor. But that's what art is — catching a thing when you may, and holding it against the future need.

There followed a divertissement from "Faust" — the classic ballet; with that I ended. We hadn't made the mistake of wearying length.

I went home myself weary, and it wasn't until the next day that I began to readjust the world. It needed readjusting remarkably little; the change I had looked for hadn't come. I still read it in the morning papers, "Rose Carson, Dancer," but the print went stale before my eyes. And then it seemed that I had always been what the print said. I had danced at the Great Colony Theater, and my dancing had been attended by a certain measure of success; I had acquitted myself well, without novice's blunders; what comment there was, was favorable. And yet the world and myself remained unchanged. I had had my great experience, — it had been in its little moment great, and it had passed on to the commonplace. Two more performances were arranged for, but my father couldn't go on paying indefinitely; after that I looked ahead to blankness — more of blankness than I'd ever seen. My discouragement was nameless, a sort of fatigued depression. reaction from the forced egotism of the theater. During my little moment I had been a focus for the public gaze, — what there was of it, — and from the strong sense of it I came suddenly to the sense that it hadn't mattered in the least what I had been. For a time my faith in my own power hung slender. And it wasn't that I had expected the town to ring, to carry me on its shoulder triumphally.

Besides these intrinsic things, I had to face the new attitude of my father. I had again the impression I had caught from across the footlights, of his laboring as under a stress. What he said was wholly inadequate, "Rosie, you did finely!" something of this kind; also what he said in blame fell short, "There were things, you know, I didn't like—" But he kept his real comment to himself, and he viewed my performance with a very real emotion; he was stirred—even retrospectively. The public gaze had clothed in flesh and blood the will-o'-the-wisp of his daughter's pursuit. He had seen me dance before, but now there were footlights between. I was a creature apart, and yet I was his daughter; something deep in the parental being responded. There was pride,—also horror. He dined in Portland Place for two successive nights; it was as if he deliberately set about the new making of my acquaintance.

The rest of my series of matinees I don't remember very much about. They took on the color both of the first and of later ones; looking back, I can't make them distinctive. My houses were fairly good, I know, — better than I had any right to expect, — and one or two of the papers came out with excellent notices; of the dances themselves — of my own part in them — I remember nothing. After that I went on with Syms, devoting all my time to him, as I had resigned from Miss Cholmondeley's class in order to avoid possible unpleasantness, and profiting by my venture in various wholly technical ways. But I had expected a solution, and it hadn't come. And then just as I had grown used to its nonarrival, it came. I received a letter from Henry Daniells. me to come to his office. It was as if Saint Peter had sent for me from the gates of heaven.

I went, accompanied by Katie. I wasn't to commit myself in any way, but merely to listen to the great man—see what he had to say. Syms looked upon me as upon something dedicated to a holy purpose. My

father asked—jestingly—who the devil Henry Daniells was.

I made my way to him through a chain of outer rooms, where the less fortunate waited forlornly hoping. I left Katie in one of these, surrounded by engagement-seeking Thespians, and myself was ushered into the Presence. I found it not great at all, but rather small and rotund, with beringed fingers and an amusing ring of flesh over the back of the collar, — tremendously human withall, and with a rare childlike smile. He rose to greet me, and commented upon the brightness of the weather. We both waited, and then he told me that he had been at my last performance. We waited again.

"I'm glad to see you talk with your feet instead of with your mouth." He answered my surprise with a smile. "I understand that you're an American — I am also." It seemed, the way he said it, a very great compliment to both of us. He asked me about myself, where I'd lived, what I'd done, my age. It seemed that he'd heard of Syms before, but only in the most casual way — he'd had no personal experience of what Syms could do. "I didn't know," he said, "that he had you up his sleeve!"

'And now you know —?"

He answered me. "Why, child, I know that you can dance! I suppose you know it, too."

"Yes, of course."

"Why of course?"

I looked up at him at this and his look met mine a little quizzically. Then I saw him change there before my eyes into the Henry Daniells of tradition. He was arranging for a very large production which would be ready at one of his

theaters some time in June. He wanted me. He would have to see my father and Syms — he thought he'd take Syms too — but he had wished to see me first, before he made a final decision. His impression of me seemed favorable, I would do; we'd talk of terms and details later. And all through he never once questioned but that I should jump at the chance.

I myself had questions. What sort of a production was it? What part did he have for me? If it was one calling for experienced acting, why, I never had acted. I never had done anything but dance. Should I have to speak?

"My dear young lady," he cut my hesitations short, "you won't have to do anything that you are incapable of doing. Have confidence in me. As for the piece itself, it's an extravaganza — a journey of Aladdin through the countries of the East." He seemed to see it clear in his mind's eye. "The countries of the East. For the Gitana," he smiled, "we might even extend our tour to Spain."

"But the Gitana is modern!"

He opened wide a plump, much-kempt hand. "Extravaganza, Miss Carson, extravaganza—"

Syms would have gasped at my temerity; Daniells was not in the habit of having his statements demurred to. The extravaganza to which he referred would atone its anachronisms by a remarkable splendor — nothing would be spared, — money, labor. Most of all, knowledge. Daniells made it plain that in theatrical as well as other departments of human endeavor knowledge was the first thing and the last thing. Call it ability — what you will — he had the infinite capacity for taking pains, if not genius, at least the faculty for using well the genius which came to his hand.

He could tame powers which were in themselves greater than he was. In the midst of eccentricities he could keep both head and temper. But I outstrip my story.

The upshot of my visit was my engagement at a salary of twenty pounds a week; he took Syms as stage manager on the same terms. My agreement called for three dances a performance and bound me for a term of forty weeks—Daniells must have been sure. We would open in London some time in June and in the autumn go to New York. Daniells owned a theater in Chicago which we might later grace.

I could see it would be a term of wonders — no blankness now. To my father came utter blankness and a sudden sense of responsibility: he looked ahead; he couldn't let me go off alone, yet he couldn't leave his railroads. He set himself the task of finding me a suitable chaperon. Meanwhile rehearsals for "Aladdin's Palanquin" went on apace.

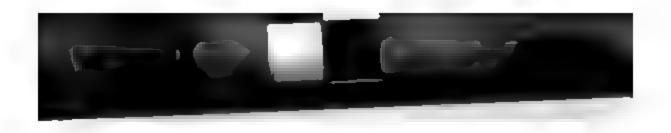
You see, I have had an easy time of it from the first; I began at the top; there's a side of the stage which I've never known — I have seen, of course, but for me I've never had it. Therefore my experience — the experience I shall here set down — is, I warn you, not in any way typical. I've never known the urgency of poverty; I've been saved many necessities and spared many problems; I've done more or less as I pleased — beholden to no man, — which in my profession has its particular advantages. And yet it seems to me that I've played fair. I had a long and arduous apprenticeship — I shouldn't have begun, as I say, at the top if I hadn't been ready for that eminence — neither Syms nor Daniells are sentimentalists. Surely it isn't necessary,

in order to reach full artistic growth, that one should be hacked about, — innured to every discomfort, physical, mental, moral. In fact, I've come to think that a certain aloofness — a skirt held well from the dust — is the most fertile field of all. I've kept my profession apart from that sort of thing; I suppose I've been lucky — I've been able to keep it apart. My life hasn't been at all the one usually ascribed to a dancer. It's a calling which seems to of itself suggest and invite. But as for me — I give my friends tea at five; I receive them in my rather austere drawing-room.

I don't mean I haven't done things at which the prude might raise an eyebrow; but if I have, it's not been through the pitfalls of my profession. Shabby intrigues at actors' boarding houses, romances begun at stage doors — they're as foreign to me and as apart as though I were a royal princess or a nun in a convent. I've been in a manner shut in by footlights — the guarding impersonal footlights; there are times when I feel the walls of my prison — when I wonder whether I shall ever break quite away — be really conspicuously impossible. But then the public gaze — to which I've at last grown accustomed — would save me; for whatever I was — whatever I did — I should see it reflected there tenfold.

[END OF BOOK I]

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BOOK II LABOR



BOOK II

XIII. PROFUNDUS

Spring is in the air. The sense of it bothers me. I've been reading the "Chorus" from "Atalanta."

"When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain."

"Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers," --

The trees in the Square are showing buds of leaves, up town in the park they've planted crocuses, the squirrels frisk about with their gray fur all warm in the sun and the children one sees are losing their wrapt mummy aspect and take on, in lighter raiment, an air distinctly human. On Fifth Avenue spring bonnets bloom. I have bought six at Clichie's and they're all hideous; they make me look either like a New England aunt or something too much the other way about. Clichie assures me it's the mode, — what is? Yesterday I did a foolish thing. A young man came to tea — I asked him to come, that was foolish in the first place; he had tea, I had my usual evening meal of mutton broth and gluten — and because of the spring and because he

reminded me of some one else, I allowed myself to be kissed. I allowed myself to be chased around the tea table—I upset the cream pitcher. It was worthy of sixteen, but at sixteen I shouldn't have thought of such a thing. Now I'm twenty-eight and unhappily married and famous, life is behind me as well as ahead, and there exists in it a man for whom I would cheerfully cut my young caller into small delicate pieces. The episode of yesterday has properly no excuse; I grant it foolish and yet I condone it. It can only be described as light. Perhaps a realization of my still further possibilities, both of lightness and of condoning, is what has led me to this.

For it is nearly a year now since the stress of living cut short my brave exploration into what was for me an unexplored region. More than a year, it's been, since I began to write this book, — this remarkable history of my own life and impressions and things and places. Nothing in the cosmos has been for me too small or too vast. . . . And then I had to give it up at the exaction of my lawful art — and now here I am again. It may serve to occupy me in the intervals of the dance, save my soul alive from youth and spring and kisses. It may serve, also, other purposes less regenerate.

For I find myself possessed of an extraordinary desire. In my early paragraphs I've spoken of a delicacy, a sense of my own brazenness in this baring of my thought which exceeded any sense of it I may have had in the merely physical nudity of tights and chiffons. Now this delicacy has changed to a desire to do exactly the thing which I formerly balked at. I was frank enough, the Lord knows, but always in spite of myself, as if something quite outside

were driving me on to an exposure which I myself disliked. Now it seems that I should never come close enough to the ultimate truth of my soul wholly to satisfy my need. But I shall lay it out, stark and staring, and I know that in this accomplishment I shall find a certain measure of deliverance—so it might be found in tears or laughter. I'll pick up my lost thread and I'll follow it out as far as I am able. How near to the ultimate truth I shall get is on the knees of the gods.

As the spring deepens it seems that many things are on the knees of the gods. I have dormant a fatalistic side which the sun nearing its zenith awakens. Nothing matters — the mightiest endeavors are but as the crackling of thorns under a pot. Nothing can be helped. One prays — if the gods so will it one receives; Fate is inscrutable, an image in a temple.

Once there was a temple at the edge of a desert, and a small leonine animal caught and brought there and worshiped there as sacred. He used to lie on a carved stone step in the doorway of the temple and blink out at the sun with eyes that were bloodshot at the rims from the contrast between dark and light. For the interior of the temple was dark, except for the light from the lamps, and the oil of the lamps mixed its stench with the burning incense and the hot dampness of closed tropic places. But the desert was clean and vast and the brown sand was marked into little waves by the wind. Beyond the desert was the sea, blue like the feather of a bird's blue wing, and a jutting rock kept watch over the sea as the small leonine animal kept watch over the desert from the doorway of the temple. There was a stream bordered by palm trees and straight

colored grasses, and the water of the stream was good for thirst of mouth and skin, and the brake was good to lie in and was filled with small things that crawled and scampered and darted. At night the stars came out or the moon rose and shadows were to play with in the moonlight. were feet that pattered out across the sand and in the dawn there were feet that pattered back, and fur that still was flattened from the marks and creases of sheathed claws. But through the day the small beast used to lie on the carved step and blink out at the sun with his bloodshot eyes and watch the worshipers as they went to their worship in the temple. They were smaller than he, as the things in the brake were smaller, they were less wise than he; all that was greater was the desert and the sea and the sky. But he watched them as they went to their worship — they didn't wear heels in those days and the walk was different; it had a glide, a furtiveness, that matched the smooth murmuring sound of voices which did more than pray. they came and went singly and the sacrifice was fresh-killed.

I have been reading an essay by a very clever, very contemporary Englishman in which he says that we come out of the East and we return to the East and all our civilization is merely an attempt at forgetting. I think there are times when the attempt fails; when something in us veiled and leashed is set free and harks us back to childhood, and back of that to the childhood of our race—returns us wholly to our nature—and back of that to the starry heavens, the limitless ether, and at last back of that wakes us to an incarnation. There are times when we are carried beyond ourselves—out of ourselves—which is in a sense being carried into ourselves. We go deeper and deeper—

PROFUNDUS

lower, is it, or higher? I'm sick with the depths of my own damnable ego. I'm sick with it, and if I can here communicate my sickness — and so lose it — but, after all, is it not the ultimate truth of my soul which is at the end of every desire I ever possessed?

XIV. "ALADDIN'S PALANQUIN"

THE other day I happened to discover that one of the lesser theaters was harboring a revival of my old vehicle, "Aladdin's Palanquin" The same spirit seized me that animates the London bus driver when he supposedly spends his holidays in riding on other men's busses. It was a Wednesday afternoon and I tucked Mrs. Cassagryer under my arm and went forth; I stood in line at the box office. and at last had the privilege of buying two seats in the eleventh row quite as an ordinary mortal. It lent relish to the occasion; I dislike a conspicuous stage box from which I simulate immense appreciation. It's twelve years now since Henry Daniells' production. He and Syms between them set a new standard of magnificence — a standard that since then has grown commonplace from long custom; the jaded modern eye seeks ever on to new marvels, but then "Aladdin's Palanquin" was unique. I'm almost sorry that I went the other day and saw it shabby and old, with the spangles turned to tinsel and the magnificence worn and cheapened. The fear kept haunting me that the magnificence had ever been a delusion of my memory and my youth, and I didn't want my delusion shattered. I'd never seen it all through from the front of the house, and it looked strange; they'd interpolated new songs and the old ones had gone stale. I remembered it with a glamor, I remembered myself thrilled nightly — dancing in a fog of light.

The dancer now is a woman who calls herself Mme. Myra,

a Russian. The conviction was borne in upon me that through some supernatural dispensation I was witnessing my own performance; from the front I too must seem quite like that. The general belief that I did not was the merest flattery — the merest prejudice. I suppressed with difficulty the desire to scream. It was the music that took me back — memories flooded me; Mrs. Cassagryer says there were tears besides. There came vivid foolish inconsequent things, not at all the things it would be likely for me to remember; the bare board walls of my first dressing room, and a photograph of the Marble Arch which a former occupant had left there, the black silk dress that the wardrobe mistress used to wear, of a mid-Victorian cut, and a thousand little intimate impressions of life and people during the triumphal progress of "Aladdin's Palanquin" from London to New York and from New York still farther into western wilds.

It had been a period when I had little life of my own; it was all absorbed into the great machine of which I found myself such an important part. Daniells had a faculty for doing that, a sort of creative turn that enabled him to make a homogeneous structure from the diverse humanity of his material. To Daniells the incalculable was calculable. He worked his people to the exact sustained limit of their capacities; he knew that limit better than they did; he gave play to their individualities so long as those individualities strengthened the main structure; beyond that he called it hysterical. He used the adjective with the conviction bred of an experience with leading ladies. Without a quiver or a doubt he harnessed the genius of Syms; without the hesitation of an eyelash he used for his own ends what-

ever of genius there was in me; he gave us in return — in spite of bridling — opportunity and, as it happened, fame.

To the fame I remember awaking one morning — twelve years ago — and finding my father standing at the foot of my bed laden with newspapers. His beard flamed.

"Well, Rosie, you seem to have got there!"

"Where?" I was still at the edge of dreams.

"Wherever you may happen to want to be: read that and that and that." He spread them all before me in a great rustling mass, the heralds of my fame, praise of me column upon column.

The triumph of "Aladdin's Palanquin" had been all mine; I was hailed and acclaimed; to Daniells belonged the honor of discovery. The night before I had received the pent enthusiasm of a phlegmatic people, and they were loyal; their press kept up the pace they had set. I read. thing I read was my own name over and over: I "was extraordinary"; I "took my muse, which had been debased and declassed, and lifted her to the high heavens of art;" I "placed dancing on a new level." It was dancing such as my critics had never seen or imagined --- which was their misfortune: most of them seemed to have seen very little of any dancing at all; I was "young, beautiful, I had the world — even London — at my wonderful feet." In me "this same world which was so the gainer by my dancing had lost a great actress." As I "danced in my long black dress with the scarlet poinsettias, as I played my little tasseled castanets and around me the guitars purred and twittered and hummed — blatant and full-mouthed — I was Spain, Spain with its white streets and its closed shutters and its sharp tropic life." I think my admirer's pen had

got the better of his logic; how I could give a sense of white streets and closed shutters, my brain refused to ponder. But he went on: my nautch-dances, if understandingly viewed, might lead to a broader comprehension of the Indian Empire. One couldn't say more than that.

Another critic gave his greater space to my Egyptian dance, for Aladdin had crossed from India through Persia and the Syrian Desert, stopping in Judea on his way to the West and Spain. In Judea, by a magnificent confusion of history, he found the Princess Salome, daughter of Herodias; she danced for him. He was privileged to witness by the Tetrarch's side that half-historic, half-fabulous exploit by which the little princess achieves the severed head of the Prophet.

At that time — twelve years ago — the "Salome Dance" hadn't become the thing it is now, hadn't penetrated to every music hall in Europe and America and grown to be a symbol and a mask for a sort of concentrated vileness. Save for the scholared and traveled it was merely a name, and on the blankness of this page Syms and Daniells and I were the first to write, for the indecencies of later renderings we were none of us responsible. I was young and fine and slim, a young savage, and my dance was as simple and as purely barbaric as though one of the statues in the British Museum had come to life. It was like that save that I was clothed in some brownish coppery garment, only my feet and ankles were bare, and very white against the brown. My critic in praise of them quoted Oscar Wilde: "She is like a little princess whose feet are of silver. She is like a princess who has white doves for feet —" He indulged himself in a very orgy of quotation, he gave himself up to it.

Flaubert next: "She danced like the priestesses of India, like the Nubians of the cataracts or like the Bacchantes of Lydia. She whirled about like a flower blown by the tempest. The jewels in her ears sparkled, her swift movements made the colors of her draperies appear to run into one another—"This when my garment was brown! And as I remember it I didn't whirl, my movements weren't swift; it had been Syms's notion that I should stalk and stride. I was angular rather than sinuous. . . .

"Be a bit awkward," Syms had said; "as if you weren't very used to dancin', but did it for this 'ere king with a sort of 'Take it and be damned to you.' You want the head of this prophet fellow — that's what you're after —" It was Syms who suggested the great gold ball which crashes from its pedestal at the end of the dance and rolls; the dancer watches it till it lies quite still on the marble floor, she goes forward and looks and then smiles up at Herod and looks again, she turns and walks away with shielded eyes. My eyelids were gilded and my face painted white like an archaic mask; there was a question whether even my mouth should be red, but redness was allowed it for the sake of the smile -Syms made a point of that. In all the praise Syms wasn't mentioned; his just measure was taken slowly. But he'd had his immediate reward. As I read I thought of him as he had been the night before; he had stood there in the wings and as the applause rose the sweat had broken beadlike on his forehead. Daniells took it more calmly, but then with Daniells the habit of success was strong.

Now my father left me and I rose and went to the window and looked out. I was in a state of vision when familiar objects seem unfamiliar, it was as if I must make their acquaintance afresh. I looked about and then back into the room and at my own face in the glass; I turned to the bed where newspapers lay scattered. It was all strange to me and new. I sat down on the side of the bed. The emotion which was passing over me, wave on wave, might have been happiness, though a quality of happiness as strange to me as all the rest, — my own face, the scattered papers, my name recurrent, the little simple daily things like the pattern in the carpet and the prints on the wall. It was the change I had sought and expected when I had danced at the Great Colony Theater — my first public bow. It hadn't come then, and now, when I had gone on, unconscious and unseeking, the thing appeared with an indecent haste, without time for a suitable farewell to the old order. I sat there on the edge of my bed and presently I was surprised by my own laughter, I heard it as a sound remote.

This isolation lent itself to my dressing, my breakfasting, my going out. I went straight to the studio in Great Queen Street only to find Syms's door closed and irresponsive to knocking. I wandered without aim. I saw my photograph in a photographer's window; a man who sat next to me in a Strand bus was reading one of the papers that praised me most; I fancied in the street that people stared. Every one seemed to be occupied with my success, yet in the midst of their occupation I was oppressed with loneliness, I thirsted for human companionship, I felt suddenly very young and very inadequate. And that night at the theater, with my name blazing in lights and the house packed and hushed, I was shy in the presence of this thing which had come to me. I had again the sense of being served up as on a platter to the public gaze, and I faced it with a bravado, the utter

abandonment of shyness. The shyness fell away after a little, with it the bravado; I danced seriously and in a manner simply; I no longer felt myself inadequate, because the fame that came to be mine hadn't to do with me myself, but was a tribute to talents and skills and beauties of which I—I myself—was merely the fortunate custodian. In the early years of my glory I was modest; it's only since I've learned how rare these talents are that I've allowed my possession of them to color, perhaps falsely, my true intimate valuations. My histrionic art enables me to carry the mantle of celebrity at least with grace. . . .

In those days I lived even more quietly than I do now. I saw no one. My natural companions, the girls I had known at Miss Cholmondeley's class, and their friends, were cut off from me by the difference of our occupations — my father wished no questions raised — and I was separated in a thousand ways from my companions of the theater. My success separated me — my name blazing in lights — and my youth, and the rather angular reserve protective of youth; I hadn't, in spite of loneliness, learned to be gregarious. Besides, in Henry Daniells' companies a certain formality prevailed; there were laws written and unwritten, a protest against the reputed easiness of the stage. Everything was very professional, very business-like; to be intimate one would have had to go out of the way. As I said, Daniells worked us, —he worked us to the high point of our efficiency. I had Syms also as a taskmaster, and the thrust of my own ambitions. Never was I so far from dalliance, never was I so conventually simple, so fundamentally secure from violating eyes, as when, under the rare and sophisticated guidance of my impresarios I

was nightly served up, — my youth, my beauty, and my talents. Success excused the thing. I had praise from the most high; in the midst of which I somehow lived, segregated and laboring.

We played all summer in London. It was hot with a moist English heat, the most trying August within the memory of the oldest citizen. But no one knows a city who hasn't known it at its worst; at first there's a cold unprejudiced hate, then submission, and then a sort of love of the thing. My years in London had been broken by little expeditions, weeks spent in the North with my father, who built railways, and flurries of Paris, and once Lucerne; but now I was bound day after day and night after night. I grew to take a solemn joy in my bondage that was, psychologically, the joy in finality, even the materialist's peace in excess. I danced and rested and danced again, I rehearsed and practiced and saved myself for those moments — ever fresh — when the light folded me and the fourth wall was made of dim faces. . . .

Into this almost cloistral dedication there was intruded, some time in August, the worldly figure of my old friend and playmate, Valentine Seymour. She and her mother had been visiting relatives in Wales and with them were now browsing about for a fag end of the London season. It was a browsing that reminded them of me; they found themselves with an enviable knowledge of one whose private ways were generally unknown. I remember the letter I found waiting for me at the theater, and later my call, with Valentine rising to greet me, a very splendid young woman indeed. I hadn't seen her since Barrington, and now she was nineteen. I remember her as she was in Barrington

and as she was then; for with her each stage and period was in itself so worth remembrance that one couldn't afford the usual confusions. She looked at me, I remember.

We both looked for an instant — we would have looked and taken in the changes that were common to us both and the individual distinctions we might not have been prepared for. Then Valentine — "Which is you — the thing I saw dancing last night, or this?" She shook me. She topped me by an inch.

We talked, at first stiffly and then with greater freedom. "What have you been doing?" "And you?" Valentine's account of herself was that she had done those things which she ought not to have done and left undone those — to cut it short, she frankly said she hadn't been behaving herself.

"You never did —"

"Oh, well, a different sort of behavior; but don't let's talk about that, it's why I'm here."

"You hate being here?"

She wouldn't say so much as that. She'd been very gay. The Welsh cousins knew people; there were cards to all the things which were left; she spoke of men, the Hon. Beverly Wicks, a Captain Neville of the Guards, others. . . . She owed most of it to a certain Mrs. Storkington who was very smart, — Valentine used the term rather for position than brains, — and who, having successfully settled her own daughters, now had the fancy to take under her wing whatever of youth and beauty she found in need of such shelter; she'd spotted Valentine at once. Any one in search of beauty would have done so. She was tall and splendid and at the same time like a very lovely doll, slender and yet round, small boned. She had round cheeks, a charming tip-tilted

nose, the smallest, oddest mouth, profoundly red like a red flower bud; but more than these, it was the grace of her that counted,—the way she walked and sat and stood, the movement of her arms and the line she made from head to toe. I as a dancer knew. There was grace even in so small a thing as the sweep of her eyelashes. Her eyes were the color and texture of certain velvets, brown with high lights and smooth. I've seen them utterly feline and sometimes like the eyes of a dog lately whipped, anything and everything but human.

She supposed that I was very gay, too, though where I kept myself she'd no idea; she'd never seen me anywhere, no one did, — but nevertheless her conception of the dancer's life was the popular one; all tinkle and froth, truffles and champagne, a Sybaritic progress. We talked of Barrington, she still went there; she told me that her brother Ted was still at school, of course—the world had marched on a ways since Ted, had left him curiously behind, a child at school; she brought me news, her fluttering fingers seemed to touch to disquiet things that in my ignorance I had thought beyond reach. Barrington came back to me and New York, the ways and faces of early schoolmates, the old sense of stress. I remember sitting there in the private parlor of the private family hotel, near by a solidly laden tea tray, and flung on a chair the typically English wrap of a Welsh cousin; I remember thoughts that were curiously irrelative to these surroundings, and that were born, not even so much of anything Valentine was saying, as of her actual tangible presence. They were hardly thoughts, bearing to those the same relation which thought sometimes bears to the exact word — something larger and vaguer. There were big vague curiosities mixed with the broad angle of her hat, the hair that showed ١

beneath it the precise red-brown color of clotted blood, the throat rising white and full out of her embroidered collar, the limp long gloves that lay in her embroidered lap. She had lately come in from a drive with Mrs. Storkington.

She returned my call, to find me out, and soon after that she sailed. I had a note from her regretting that we hadn't seen more of one another, and hoping that when I came to New York, where she expected to be the following winter, we would make amends for our omissions. I replied in I don't know how much she had seen of me, but I had kind. seen her, and that vision had stirred the future for me as well as the past; it had seemed to remind me that the whole of my destiny wasn't contained in "Aladdin's Palanquin." Why my brief sight of her there at her hotel should have been so rich in suggestion — so rich beyond all reason — I don't know; it wasn't that I had only been looking at Valentine herself, but through her to a dim vision of the life with which she and I together would be concerned; her very remarkable charms had served me as a clouded crystal. But again my work possessed me, a possession barely troubled by New York in October.

We sailed up the bay in the fine autumn haze, and I had rather looked forward to a greater emotion than I actually experienced. I was the returning wanderer, the little girl who had left her native land unknown, — even in disgrace, — who came back laurel-crowned, triumphant. I told myself this; I managed to work up what might pass for a sense of it, and then, my theatrical instinct satisfied, I found myself interested in the more realistic side of the occasion — the cameras that uncovered to me the moment we touched shore, the reporters and press agents, Daniells himself, al-

ready in New York, meeting me at the pier. We were photographed in the act of shaking hands. I hadn't realized how triumphant my home coming was to be. I was given what is known in theatrical parlance as an entrance; I was accented; a hush surrounded me; a magic circle, in the midst of which I stood, slim and young and mysterious. I arrived with my eight trunks, my maid, and my chaperon (I beg my friend's pardon for the term), and for this moment of my arrival the great managerial genius arranged an atmosphere of greatness; I felt its spell myself, the reporters were like hounds on a scent. I could see what I hadn't been aware of before, that this New York of mine was the trump card of the pack — the final test.

XV. QUALITIES

I REMEMBER all that. If in London quietness had been the note struck, in New York I was blazoned from the roof tops, as suited the more vociferous hemisphere. I remember the big theater on Broadway, and the posters, dignified but striking; the imposing and modish hotel where I made my abode. But most of all, perhaps, I look back to the dawning quality of the woman to whom my father had finally intrusted me, she whose quality yet dawns and blossoms with new wonder. In the midst of a broken inconstant life Paula Cassagryer has shown me that I do possess the possibility of faith and of friendship. She's been mother, sister, and father confessor; jesting when I'm gay and grave when I'm sad, and all the time with her own very manifest powers as ballast for her devotion.

The first that I ever heard of her was from Daniells. It seemed that the well-known critic, Cassagryer, of the Review, had recently died after a protracted illness, leaving his widow in reduced circumstances. As she herself had a literary destiny which she didn't wish to jeopardize by uncongenial employment she was searching about for something that would give her both freedom and sustenance. She was in every way a charming woman, — clever, responsible; it need hardly to be said that Cassagryer's wife was educated. Daniells knew we were looking for some one; he didn't think she would object to travel, perhaps she might

be induced to consider it, — that was how it was put. The great organizing genius had evidently approached her at the same time. A meeting was arranged. My father called at her lodgings and came back enthusiastic. "But do you know what she must have, Rosie? A room secluded and apart, and except for the necessary interruptions of traveling, her mornings free to occupy it. She writes. She announced it as she might have warned me that she drank or stayed out at night, — I could take it or leave it, — but I think I'll take it; you know, I liked the woman! Outside of that she didn't make any fuss about terms, and the only thing she asked me was whether you were strong. I told her you would have to be to do what you did. 'Oh,' she said, 'muscles, I know; but is she well — cheerful? I'm very cheerful myself; but you see my work, the start I'm trying to get in it, is more important to me than anything If living with your daughter would in any way interfere with that, why, of course, I couldn't consider it.' 'By Jove,' I said, 'you're frank!' But, you know, I liked the woman!"

That interview must have had beauties which even my father missed. She came to see me and found me, so she afterwards said, more of a child than she had imagined; but on the whole she was satisfied. She decided to accept the position of chaperon. I remember her little white face, ferret-like in its keenness, and topped by a really noble brow, as she sat there opposite me at our first meeting, evidently watching and weighing. It never occurred to her that I should watch and weigh; it somehow never has. I think it's one of the reasons we get on, that we both have the most entire faith in our own adequacy. Now that Mrs. Cas-

sagryer's had her start and taken such wonderful advantage of it, now that she's attained the most independent sort of means, she lives with me from choice. But I can't think of her as ever having done so from anything else. It's the kind of thing that makes me a little proud.

We made each other's acquaintance in a shy tentative way on the steamer coming over; in New York we "got in" still farther. From the abandoned hysterical intimacy that passes for friendship with most women, we were saved by the difference in our years, which seemed greater then than now; also by a certain angularity of our mutual make-ups. There are things we've never said to each other, barriers we've both respected. We've talked, of course; we shall go on talking till one of us dies; but our talk is usually made up of thought rather than confidences, the sum of experience rather than the experience itself. In this broad way we've talked of love. She feels, strangely, that I've never known it, — I, who've known it too much. She's told me something of her marriage, which must have been a very happy one in spite of illness and at times need; for Cassagryer's reputation was beyond his income. "He kept his judgment pure," she said. "He had the rare faculty of criticism; he could put aside his own petty prejudices and be grandly just. In the Review he could write as he pleased, but it didn't pay well, and sometimes he was so ill that he would be forced to give his work to others to do; I've tried never to stand in his way." Her loyalty flamed white: "The lesser was absorbed in the greater." She denied herself her husband's gift; she hacked about, she said, in her own small mind without the talent of appreciating others, while he . . . It's that side of her marriage she's talked about most, — the

sympathy of soul. We disagree upon the relative values of the flesh; we were discussing them only yesterday.

It was hard, going off like that, leaving my father waving his hat on the pier, an ever diminishing figure in an increasing distance; that it turned out as it has, is part of my unconscionable luck.

Later, my father paid me a visit, combining business with parental care. We clung to each other, — he, especially, had a humanity which could be depended upon to rise supreme to the occasion, — but our separation had widened our essential independence. It wasn't our first one, but with me dancing in America and my father engineering in England, it was the first to mark us as separate. He found me changed. I was less blinded by the Jovian image; yet there it was, the extraordinary manifest vigor of the man. He did a great deal, but I always feel that he should have done more; he should have been born into another age, sacked towns, ruled kingdoms, populated great barren lands . . . He had forces creative and destructive; the modern world confused their usefulness. He didn't sack, but then he didn't rule, — perhaps a defiance of space and nature would be the later equivalent for ruling, — and for population, there was I. I hope I've made up in quality for other unavoidable deficiencies. With my father I always had a sense of the waste that went on; as in an engine a certain very small portion of the steam generated goes to the actual moving of the machine, so with him. There was waste in the redness of his beard, the boom of his voice; there were the ladies who called him Billy, — in New York more ubiquitous than in Portland Place; tremendous intensities were misdirected.

I have said that my father found me changed. He had left me, or I had left him, when my brows were still raised to the surprise of success; he found me serene with a sort of mature serenity. I make no attempt to render faithfully the exact quality of my development, —it's not possible after the confusing passage of after developments and years; but it seems to me that my later adolescence differed very materially from the rule. Love is the great adolescent concern, the thing of dreams and thoughts, around which the world turns, and during this period love was left entirely out of my calculations. I was otherwise occupied — to me more importantly. I can't put it strongly enough. My complete indifference more than made up for the precocities of my childhood; without innocence I was yet unfired, perhaps because of the lack. And it comes to me, hoping not to shock unduly, that my nonchalance in this direction might have been the natural balance and result of my chosen calling; that in itself took a fire. I attained poise, most necessary to the dancer; at seventeen I attained serenity of soul; and yet I had ripened through art rather than through life, which perhaps the layman wouldn't understand.

I've tried to make it clear just how quiet and how regular my life was, how with me at that time there was little of the waste I've talked of; my energies were all absorbed in my work, my excitations also were there. I don't think any one who hasn't done it can realize the effect of the precise same thing done again and again at stated hours and intervals. Consecutively, night after night, I danced my three dances without the conscious variation of a hair's breadth. Sometimes I would dance better, sometimes less well; sometimes my audience would have a greater sympathy, — their newness and freshness made in a measure for my own, — but that eternal repetition had its sure effect. Every actor knows; it works its way through the various stages of one's mental processes, it excites at the same time that it controls.

We played in New York through February, a month in Chicago, and then back for a season of London and a new production, for in the midst of "Aladdin" Syms had kept me at it with studies and experiments. Daniells had been using Syms for other enterprises. He shot him about, east and west; his talents were allowed so far afield as stage settings for Ibsen and a new device for the "ghost" in "Hamlet."

Syms liked America; it had hitherto been the rather large exception to the universality of his travels. In New York he installed himself in a studio over one of Daniells' theaters, and in his rare moments of leisure he would sit there at his window and look out over the mighty roar and swell of Broadway. "They're young, they're slim, they've got nothin' to occopy their minds, but they can't dance—Lord, no!" At first it wouldn't be wholly clear to whom he referred. "Now see that little 'un in the checked suit; if it wasn't for the heels and the corsets, she might be taught somethin'. She ought to 'ave been took, and took young. I'd like to start a school — compulsory, you know; it might be done. . . . " He wouldn't be far from a struggle with the great social questions, and then, "Checks, shepherd's plaids, they call 'em; now there's an idea in those, clownish but decorative, -sort of pen and ink, -a whole stage in pen and ink, no color; not bad at all."

And then Syms the manager, more affairé than Daniells ever was, taking his responsibilities — even his importance — very much to heart, combining miraculously a calm selfassurance with a bristling self-defense, and with it all, getting there — accomplishing prodigies. He took a great liking to Mrs. Cassagryer, improving every opportunity to make her acquaintance. She was responsive, and they had some intimate moments of talk; she somehow got at the soul of the man as I never did; I suspect the origin of her novel "Bow-Bell." Now that human side of Syms struck me as commonplace and dull. Each to his own. He told her of his wife in Ealing, who continued to remain in Ealing during all his peregrinations, and I think there came to be an interest less sanctioned, of which the novelist knew more than was meet for my maiden ear. Syms found himself with a full pocket, —his standard of such things was simple, money and in certain circles power, with much in fact to give an impulse to kindness. Adventure would be plausible almost logical; would the cockney triumph, or the genius? would there be utter low sordidness or momentous transfigurations? But however and whatever, the literary ruthlessness would ferret it out; Mrs. Cassagryer knew it's only through her mercy that I, in darkness, have managed to give as much as I have. It's only at this later day that I speculate thus; at the time it all mattered to me even less than it does now. We live in the midst like that, — unaware, the present ever incomplete till there comes the future knowledge of it, enlightening.

What mattered to me twelve years ago, and what didn't, speaks for the quality of my chaperon. She avoided the Cholmondeley-Sheffield tone at the same time that she kept a

watchful eye; she was frank yet careful. The situation was a difficult one, the charge unusual: the dancer in "Aladdin's Palanquin," the young Salome, the nautch girl, also sole exponent of the Gitana, and withal a mere child whose rather unfortunate early background had been atoned by the exceeding correctness of her immediate one, — this young anomaly to be shielded from harm, directed along the paths of righteousness. It surely wasn't simple, the problem to be met, but Mrs. Cassagryer brought to it the same cold study with which she might approach a perplexity of romance. She emerged supreme. My liberty was a matter of course, advice was sparing and unneeded, the thing was to keep a wholesome viewpoint; dancing was — well — dancing, and life was quite another thing. She spoke of my mother with justness and tact; she prepared me for a circumstance that never happens to have arisen: "If your mother writes to you or comes to see you, Rose, - she must have heard of you and know where you are, — why, what will you do?"

But Valentine Seymour was the issue she had most to face. She admired Valentine, she took an interest in her, but for all her interest and her admiration she felt subtly the presence of the enemy. Valentine was not (and my warder had no direct means of conclusion) exactly the influence for me. Valentine's influence was overrated. Sometimes I feel that in the large sum of things I overrate it myself.

We had redeemed our mutual promises, made in London, and in New York we saw more of one another than even these had warranted. My friend had the leisure to suit her convenience to mine; she formed the habit of dropping in at spare moments, also at moments which were not so spare. My contemporaneous studies with Syms are mixed

in my memory with remembrances of her, restless and stirring in the next room, basking in the light of the broad windows, lounging in a far corner — lounging and watching She took a sort of pleasure in her own laziness, a pleasure I think to be always sharpened by the contrast, the near presence, of labor. It's a theory which may account in part for the host of charming idle people who find in art a sympathetic atmosphere; the stress and pain of any art seems to give forth an emanation upon which they thrive, they sense the excitement, themselves recumbent. I think it was this as much as any great love for me that made Valentine seek me out; she liked my environment; for her the stage had mystery, mystery at the same time that it had familiarity; its contact gave her a tingling sense of both. She liked my things; I remember her "trying on" endlessly, posing before the big triple mirror, twining draperies which on her always seemed to fall right, setting great sham crowns on her extraordinary hair. She had a way of touching the things she liked best — I have an idea that with her that fifth sense was carried to a point. She stroked and caressed, and the gauze seemed to live under her hands; she had a genius for things; and I, with my abominable "using" faculty, learned from her.

It was Mrs. Cassagryer's idea that I learned too much, but she didn't press the question; in fact, it was I who first brought it up — confronted my mentor with the fact that she didn't like Valentine. "Well, Rose," she had said, "I feel that she's older than you —"

[&]quot;Three years —"

[&]quot;And at your age three years —"

I put it that so, for that matter, was every one I knew —

older than I. . . . We discussed this phase of it and in time I had from Mrs. Cassagryer the whole way she felt. It was an essentially feminine complication, — the young girl, her conscientious protector, the slightly older friend at whom it was difficult to point any very definite finger. We three women acted and reacted upon each other almost without masculine leaven, — what little there was of that came indirectly from Valentine; one of Mrs. Cassagryer's objections to her was her too great preoccupation with the other sex. ourselves, her world was wholly peopled with men, her talk was a list of names and illuminating comment, she respected neither age nor youth. There was a kind of primitive wisdom which she had; she knew men as a woman does — no matter what her years — who sees them primarily as men, not as individuals, and on that broad basis she had managed to work out the species of erudition which Mrs. Cassagryer would have been contented that she keep to herself.

It wasn't her fault that with me she confined herself to talk. . . . "Such a nice boy who is of course crazy to meet you — if you would let me bring him some afternoon —" It was hard for her to understand that I didn't feel as she did; in certain respects she found my life terribly blank, her easy generosity would have rescued me. But Mrs. Cassagryer thought it less generosity than a desire to shine in the reflection of celebrity; it was one thing to have one's self the entrée to celebrity, another still more glorious to be allowed to bring one's friends.

"Young Miss Seymour doesn't hide her light under a bushel—"

There's never been much love lost between those two. Mrs. Cassagryer didn't like the way the Seymours lived.

"Leaving their house in Montreal and spending the winter in a hotel in New York — leaving Mr. Seymour and all their duties —" The Englishwoman had the true English idea of duty and the first claim of the head of the house.

I tried to make it plain that we were doing the same thing, living in a hotel in New York and deserting Mr. Carson. But we had a reason, and besides, it was just because we had deserted Mr. Carson that I had to be so careful.

"But father always liked Valentine!"

There was nothing to answer to that. Mrs. Cassagryer took refuge in the creaking of the Seymour elevator and the general discomfort with which they put up for the sake of an exterior show. Both mother and daughter dressed magnificently, and yet when she called she had the conviction that what clothes they didn't have on were tucked away under the sofa. When she called she had found Valentine about to go out with a very magnificent young man; she postponed her going only so long as politeness required and then left with a bare word about the tea getting cold. The visitor reported that the young man had laughed and Mrs. Seymour had afterwards explained that her daughter had an engagement to take Mrs. Cassagryer still hadn't understood — "Take tea — where?" "Oh, somewhere smart; Penny Black is too good looking to be hidden here." Mrs. Cassagryer had thought it more meet for the young people to have tea quietly with their elders: the whole thing was in execrable taste. The fact that "Penny" Black was in society and the Seymours more or less on the edge of it didn't blind her eyes; she didn't understand quite what we meant by society in this country where there was no aristocracy, but she supposed that the idea of the Seymours was that Valentine should

make a good marriage with one of her young men. It would be better for her to have less of them then, and be less free with her eyes and her conversation.

These reflections and observations were not all at once; they extended over a considerable period of time, but in getting the general gist of things it seems simpler to bring them all together. The incident of the tea and "Penny" Black was one of many of a similar sort, and to Mrs. Cassagryer a similar breach. But that lady's distrust had a deeper foundation than mere incidents; it depended, she said, upon a quality of Valentine Seymour's inner self. In those early days I don't see how she knew what that quality was. . . .

XVI. FEAST OF REASON

In spite of Valentine's efforts to draw me into the net of the New York social fabric, and some few other rather abortive attempts, more inquisitive than sincere, it remained for Chicago to first bring me what Mrs. Cassagryer gravely called the haut monde. I danced there for a month, and during that month I had the honor of being the lion of the hour — an honor which in Chicago I've never wholly lost. I return there to find my friends loyal. I was taken up in a systematic Western fashion, the barrier of the footlights was demolished, my privacy, my mystery, — it all fell before an invading acclaiming host. I found a cordiality, a sincerity of admiration. It was partly my dancing they liked, partly me myself, and partly - more abstractly - my success. That more than anything. "You've made good, Miss Carson, you've put it over the plate —" The phrase, self-explanatory, belonged to a man prominent in large affairs and whose wife had entertained me on a scale. "You've put it over and — you'll pardon me? — you're hardly more than a child." the clamoring competitive West success is the great shrine upon which the sacrifices are laid; they worship youth, also, and whatever can be fitted by the adjective advanced. They're ever in the van; it's the old exploring instinct of their forefathers; but they would tend to deny their fore-Modernity is the shibboleth, the future, the object of their effort. "You, Miss Carson, who've lived so much in London, must remember that Chicago's not as old as

London — we're just beginning — wait till we're through!" Vast things would be indicated.

Perhaps it is for this that they go in so thoroughly for education: one finds a mass of conscientious study; art is there with a capital A, and literature and the sciences. In the scramble of success they don't underestimate the value of mind, they find that in the long run it pays. Mrs. Cassagryer met people who knew her husband's work in the Review, even those who had read his essays, people she would never have met in New York. They bring to their cultivation the same enterprise that they bring to their finance; with them it's a highly organized thing even outside their colleges and schools, and not limited to the growing mind. There are clubs, societies, isms, the mind in Chicago might be regarded as ever growing. And it's this side, this conscious ideal of themselves that they have, that I should emphasize most, rather than the grimy misery, the terrific pressing under, which is perhaps a passing phase. I suppose the stockyards are very horrible, and the vice, and I know the heavens are blackened with soot; but these things are the loose ends which some day will be gathered up. On the lake front there are magnificent palaces filled with beauty, and sometimes, suddenly, on the breeze will come a breath — or less than a breath, a sense — of vastness and wind-swept prairies.

Upon what Mr. Kipling would call my lawful occasions I've since pretty much covered this continent of ours; but then my areas had been more limited. Chicago gave me my first glimpse, not only of the haut monde, but of America itself; for New York isn't America, it's the place to which Americans come, and as for Barrington — but there I had been a child. In Chicago I was hardly more, but it seemed

o me that every one else was equally young, even the really old people had a sort of youth. There was Colonel Rangely.

Colonel Rangely — turned seventy and with a vitality putting younger men to shame, touching chords and waking senses — but I can speak only for myself. I remember an afternoon and evening that stand out. . . .

It was his daughter whom I knew. She was prominent in a certain social life, the by-product of the larger commerce; she read papers at women's clubs and served on charitable She had brought all her prominence to bear committees. and got me for a charity bazaar. The acquaintance thus begun wasn't allowed to fall into disuse; she gave a tea for me on a certain Sunday — a tea which Colonel Rangely utterly upset. The festivities had hardly started, Mrs. Jebb — the daughter was the wife of the well-known banker of that name — had hardly got through a dozen introductions, when there came a summons, curt but clear. "Please ask Miss Carson to come upstairs, I should like to see her." Mrs. Jebb gave me the little penciled note — "It's father, I'm afraid you'll have to go, but don't be long." And then apologetically and sotto voce, "I hope you don't mind, but father's very ill, you know, and has to be humored —"

I was prepared for a hushed moment at an invalid's bedside. I was ushered to the presence of a seated figure erect in a high-backed chair, a face swart and grizzled, and young eyes which looked out at me clear from under bushed brows. The servant—a young negro dressed in white like a car porter—left me and I stood there alone, facing the eyes and taking in an impression of the big dim room, blackened it seemed to be, the walls as if blackened with the smoke of battle. But windows opened to the lake where little waves sparkled, and

the floor was enlivened by the glossed skins of animals, — bears and a great maned lion and lesser beasts. I made my way across through snarling teeth and claws that caught on my skirts; I was asked to sit down. It was kind of me to have come, but now that I was there I would extend my kindness and stay — "Sit there, where I see you — you'll excuse my not rising? but I've only one leg and a bad one at that—" I remember that the voice atoned. I remember many things. I saw Colonel Rangely only that once, he died soon after; I believe even then he was doomed — but my impression, received that once, has stayed, and at times the enthroned figure — whose mutilations were half concealed and half accented by a well-weathered vigor — looms, looms larger than other figures, the impressions of which are more affirmed. I find myself remembering the man, I don't know why I haven't mentioned him before. I have a symbolic turn of mind, I'm rather prone to discovering in very concrete facts large representative things, and Colonel Rangely typifies to me all the bigness and the very masculine power with which I've managed to be so concerned. The isolation of the image marks it the more.

I didn't go down again to his daughter's tea. I stayed with him all the afternoon, had dinner with him at last, and the hours went on well into the evening. Early I was sent for — the entertainment was utterly spoiled — but word went back that Miss Carson couldn't come, another party could be given for her another day, Mrs. Jebb's guests could control their disappointment as they might. "That is," Colonel Rangely said, "if you would like to stay —"

[&]quot;Oh - you know I would! But isn't it rude?"

[&]quot;Not rude of you - rude of me. I don't trouble them

much, I shan't trouble them long, but I like them to pay tribute to the infirmities of age — I like to feel I'm their master, even though it's only by courtesy. There's too little of that — of the master, I mean. Ah — you think so too? You're a little barbarian. I'll tell you something — I went the other day and saw your show. My boys — my two niggers — got me in early to the back of a box; I shouldn't have gone; but don't you ever feel the walls around you? — there are times when life pulls. . . . All this about the Maine has stirred me up — I'm wondering if there'll be war and I shan't be any use. Still I've had my day, I can't complain. Where did you learn your gypsy dance? You reminded me of a girl I used to know in Guadalajara — I would ride over from Tepatitlan — I suppose you dance better than she did —"

We talked — or rather, it was he who talked — I've given some of the matter and manner of it. As he went on his speech grew simpler; he spoke simply of war and fortune and women; he had held lightly this life that still pulled him, and yet for that he had fought and loved and waited; he had labored in the sun and known the feel of a galloping horse; he had rested in the cool of the evening and watched the morning star fade white in a paling sky. I seemed to take him back, and then as he talked I think he forgot me. Speech grew simpler — facts stood stark, places and people — a man with whom he had crossed the Arizona desert in '72 who had tried to kill him in the night and whom he had carried bound into the town, the girl at Guadalajara — women everywhere — a long space of solitude — "Sixty days," he said; "I counted them."

There were horrors, — the face of an Indian he had shot

in a fight, he had seen a man lynched once —strung up an burned — he remembered that, and the sound of a mo shouting. He spoke of his wife who was dead. His recol lection of her seemed to go back; she was a pretty child so fair. She had borne him sons who were now great bearde men; she had given the girl her life. "We weren't wher there were doctors. It sets a man thinking. . . . Grac has been a good daughter to me." Was it of that? — H didn't see fit to explain himself. In fact, his recital wa marked by a singular absence of illuminating comment depending for its clearness upon the crude event. only been unconsciously that he had drawn conclusions or rather they had drawn themselves in large-lined surface of head and hand; he was a man in the habit of discardin unessential baggage, unessential difficulties. He could ar praise swiftly and judge, and beyond that the measure (his discrimination might have run short. I asked him -I forget what called the question forth — if he ever had an regrets.

"Yes, I once sold a horse to a greaser named Pinzett who ill-treated him; I didn't know at the time, but I'v always regretted that."

I had a moment of shame for being reprimanded for m effrontery, and then I saw he was deadly grave, it was a tuality carried to a point. "But for bigger things?"

He went unexpectedly into verse: —

"'What of the quarry you went to kill? Brother, he crops in the jungle still—;

There's been something of that, of course."

"But with you," I said, "very little."

He kindled. "Yes, when you put it like that, very little

indeed. I've shot pretty straight, in every way. In every way." The old man repeated it slowly. One had a glimpse then of age, a slow chewing of the cud; the young eyes were veiled.

As I say, I stayed to dinner. A table was brought in all set and spread, the white-coated servants served swiftly and silently, a fire burned brightly and shone reflected on the ruddy animal skins; outside on the lake lights gleamed, winking or still. In spite of my calling, which might be considered to throw me in the way of such experiences, it was the first time that I had ever dined alone with a man other than my father; and in spite of the dread years, which for a moment here and there reared their hoary heads, Colonel Rangely was very much a man. I was woman enough for that, and child enough for the fairy feast it was: I was a princess prisoned in the castle of a great lord of war, a slave summoned to the table of her master — or best of all — a favorite dancing girl of the king, for I cleared away the rugs and danced, my long velvet dress whisking under my feet.

The swing of strange fact ran wide, sounds came plain — muffled oars, the wind going through tall grasses, the scrape and yelp of a fiddle in a dance hall in South Platte, and the way a woman laughed there, sitting at a table near the open door.

Anecdote rose: "I can hear her now; Franks can, too, if what she said to him came true and he's where I suppose he ought to be. He got on his horse before he said a word. We were waiting. Then he turned around on her, she was sitting there by the door leaning forward on her elbows. 'I hope to God I never hear you laugh again!' 'The place you'll hear it God won't be there to hope to!' Laughing

she was, laughing, and she'd been through him in the night. taken all his money and the ring he'd got in Denver for his girl — everything — but he didn't dare prove too much — the joke was on him. When we got out about a mile I asked the little chap who was riding on the other side of Franks what kind of a fool he thought Franks was. isn't my affair, sir.' So I had to tell him myself, and I put it strong. When I was through I asked the little chap if he had anything to add to my report. 'It isn't my affair, sir.' A fat little chap with a crooked mouth. 'And why isn't it your affair?' said Franks, quite suddenly. 'Why isn't it, I'd like to know? Isn't it good enough for you?' And then Franks passed on to him some of my expressions. we all felt better and got into camp the next day feeling very fit — all except Franks, and finally he decided he was as well off as before he'd had the money or the ring, anyway — and he'd had experience, besides."

That bit stands out undimmed in its simplicity. It came up to the surface quite naïvely — as naturally as a fish might leap from deep water and curve its shameless glinting body in the sunlight. It wasn't that Colonel Rangely was coarse, but whatever of coarseness there was in him was so intrinsic that he was unaware of it; perhaps he took things a bit by and large, some of his talk wasn't exactly meat for babes, but then it is to be remembered that by the casual judgment I wasn't a babe — nor by profounder judgment, either. . . . There was always my background, my bringing up, my parents, even my chosen profession to be weighed in the balance with my fineness. A chord in me, touched once or twice before — there had been murder, the Café Marin, a boy, the son of Black, standing in my stateroom door,

the disturbing presence of Valentine Seymour — that chord, only touched, for the most part fumbled, now sounded loudly. In explanation I found myself telling my host that our souls were alike, his and mine, to the which he responded in laughter.

I sat on the floor by his chair that he'd had wheeled near the fire, in my lap was a plate of great purple grapes, the last of dinner, by my side a glass, the tingle of whose contents still ran in my blood. I was filled with a perfection of well-being known only to the feasting young. I had eaten and I had drunken; there had been talk, and the company of a man from whom the years had seemed to fall away leaving only their bigness and splendor, which gave something lacking to my cruder youth. My well-being expanded — grew to an exaggeration of joy — I stretched my feet to the blaze and my hands up to be held in a firm clasp. I remembered the hand of the man at the Café Marin. He had put it out over the white cloth, passive; it had contained for me the possibility of strength. Colonel Rangely's hand had the strength all there. Before, at various times, I had felt a stir which I have called the stir of possibility, I felt it again now, and with it a peace — at last a sort of hush. In the midst of the hush I danced, and then I set the phonograph and danced to that.

On the whole, it was a very innocent orgy; I would hold for it so in the face of refutation. It was true I pressed an old man's hand and forgot that he was old, and once he put his arm altogether around me — he was the first I had ever suffered so to touch me — and I found it good. Fact swung wide into far worlds; I had eaten and drunken and found that good, too, and stretched at my ease in the warmth. Fact

came from me at last; light things I had seen and passed on the way, the little thoughts I had always forgotten to express; and then back of that I gave tongue — all but buried memories of my childhood, things about my mother, and from something that was said about hating a man and my ready comprehension of it, I got to the story of Ted Seymour and the robbers' cave. "I hated him," I said. "I hate him now, only — don't you see? — there isn't anything to hate, for he's now a little boy at school, — he's forgotten, he's quite gone. It's like reaching for something and there isn't anything there —" It was then Colonel Rangely put his arm about me — "You're the first live thing —"

I laughed; I remember that laugh; it was utterly different from the loud certainty of the woman in South Platte. The sound of it, which I heard distinct and separate from myself, called back the Café Marin, of which I talked. The colonel thought it was a strange place for my father to have taken me. He didn't put his thought in words, but I knew and understood it. Suddenly I understood a great deal—Valentine Seymour, for example, as I never had done before, and I talked of her.

- "She's a friend of yours?"
- "My best, except Mrs. Cassagryer."
- "And where is she now?"

The whereabouts of Mrs. Cassagryer recalled itself to me. She was downstairs with the Jebbs awaiting my pleasure; there had been a tea which I had left, she might have left too — but no, not without me; she would still be waiting. Colonel Rangely had at last sent word that I would dine, and after that we had been undisturbed. The hour must have got utterly beyond me, — I made a vain effort to recover

it by a little clock which I found didn't go. "It's late," I said, "very late indeed." I was back — as if I had ever been away! — and my eyes were hot; through the heat I saw my host and the peeping years again between us.

"Deference," he was saying, "deference—" And then, "Infirmities.... I have to be humored, you know, I mustn't be crossed. But why should I be in this? I'm quite harmless—they'll tell your friend that—they'll reassure her." I had a vision of my protector beating at locked doors—she who had my well-being forever at heart. But wasn't this a well-being, and of a sort she could never have given me? The magic of it was still unfathomed.

"It's you who've harmed me," said Colonel Rangely.
"I—?"

"I was reconciled—ready to abide—and now I'm not; why should I be? You, who have everything before you—you don't know what you've got, you don't know—and I, with as much behind, and knowing, am more than ever ready to begin. . . . If I want to live, why shouldn't I? Why should you—? Come here—"

But I wouldn't go to him then. I stood by the mantel where I had looked at the little clock, but looking now at the greater record which was seated erect in an invalid's chair—spent, unavailing, and seeming to struggle even in its stillness. I had read of a theory that the dead who find nothing in a future world crowd at the gates of this, trying for life again and struggling. The man was like that. He felt this living which he found so desirable slipping, irrecoverable, and I think that I would have had a brief power to stay it—it was with me, like the power I had at the theater. The effect I produced night after night as I danced, the hard atten-

tion reaching varying levels of emotion, the curious indefinable possession of an audience—here it was specific. Power, that was it, power, and something in me was slipping—my stiffness in the face of a fear which came to me. I wasn't myself, it was the very reverse of power, and proven by the difficulty of walking from the mantel to the window where the night air came in cool. "It's all wrong," I said.

"What is?"

"Everything." I achieved amazing rudeness — "That you should be as you are, old and lame and grizzly — oh, yes, grizzly! — instead of being — "I stopped.

"Well —?"

"As you are not!" I said with a voice which didn't seem like mine. But it spoke the truth; I wanted him young and standing tall, for the grizzle I shouldn't have really cared. If I had shown him to old ways he had shown me to ways unreckoned. Put simply, as Colonel Rangely himself might have put it, we had both played the devil and the game was blocked — had been from the start, which, good people might justifiably say, should never have taken place. These same good people might find in my orgy — which I still proclaim innocent — the revels of a bad old man and a dancer whom he abstracts from his daughter's agreeable entertainment and (not in the least against the lady's will, be it said) immures for many hours in his sitting room. She dances, listens, talks; he dines her — who knows but wines? and generally entertains her as well as his impairments permit. Viewed that way the occasion takes an air, an air even of the Café Marin. But to say that the occasion in question has its place in the scheme of things, is in its place a right part of life, and to say that the other was a degenerated

outgrowth, false, a thing of habit and money — to say all this would be too big a mouthful, too subtle a distinction.

Colonel Rangely put all the harm of it squarely. "I'm afraid, my dear, I've let you have too much champagne. I didn't think of your not being accustomed to it." He pressed a button by his chair, and I was taken to where I could bathe my forehead.

I returned, refreshed. "Pull yourself together," he said; "I have in this house a reputation to sustain, which isn't the reputation of getting little girls fuddled. Now do you feel better? But don't mind what I say, Rose; we've enjoyed ourselves in our own way, haven't we? Good-by." His beard brushed my hand, his face as he raised it was set grim. "I think you'll find Mrs. Cassa — Cassadyer, is it?—downstairs."

I was escorted to that anxious waiting presence. The next morning, Monday, I received enormous roses bearing on their card the simple scrip — For being humanly treated.

XVII. "... AND CABBAGES AND KINGS"

I THINK I've set it down, even at the risk of repetition, how my dancing has been all along the thing that's saved me and held me and made whatever else I did by comparison unimportant. "I go back to my dancing" — "Again my work possessed me" — "This genius . . . has taken the place of a more Christian faith." "The effect of the precise same thing, again and again." I remember like phrases. And once more they are in point. It wasn't a merely fanciful preoccupation, there it was, the actual daily labor of it. If on Sunday I had feasted, if my feet had trodden unreckoned ways, on Monday I fasted and my feet of necessity returned to more familiar pursuits. I was stirred, shaken, more than all I was baffled. I shall go on, as well as the space of the years permits, to recall further the course of the days — what I did and how I felt and just what the change was which had been wrought in me — but first I make it plain that however great the upheaval, if it hadn't been for the balance-wheel of my profession it would have been greater still. There were whole hours when I was so very much taken up by things theatrical that the emotional canvass was forced to the wall in spite of itself. For this part of existence which had come to me so freshly after years of quiet didn't have its immediate reflection in my art; my Gitana wasn't changed, nor my nautch dance, nor the dance of the young Salome, because a man albeit old and maimed — had kindled me to the very passion with which these dances were supposedly concerned. As

Mrs. Cassagryer said, dancing was one thing and life quite another.

I remember when the episode of the Café Marin had cooled from its first heat it seemed to me that the whole world of flesh existed merely for the glory of my own genius. At twenty-eight I would modify that a little, and it isn't the genius which I find less, but the flesh greater. One wrests a small bit of its power by an infinite pain of endeavor, one uses as one can — and what is genius but the ability to use? — but at twenty-eight I'm modest and hardly dare hope that anything is all bent to my purpose. At seventeen I was at yet another answer to that problem, I accepted the dictum of Mrs. Cassagryer — I went on, my dancing untouched by the storms which swept me. I had unspoiled nerves, a perfect constitution, and perhaps in the midst of my success a creativeness temporarily blocked. I was absorbed in my work, I continued to be absorbed in it; I was kept by very force of circumstance from being too wholly absorbed in anything else; but I don't think it was a time when I visibly progressed.

It wasn't then an altogether devastating adventure, this holiday revel, this surrender — broadly speaking — to the conqueror. I had serene moments of unconcern, and others, perhaps born of these, of a kind of speculative coldness. I rose sufficiently supreme; and then, as that altitude seemed sure, I would fall to ignominious depths of tumult — again supremacy — again depths — I came to mistrust them both. . . . I lay awake, my hands outstretched to the darkness, shaken and troubled and uncomprehending. Uncomprehending and yet convulsed with the eternal truths, flooded in fact — not fact as it is usually defined, — the thing I mean

is more abstract than that, reality is better, or a sense of reality. Everything around me seemed very real, very alive. I had also, very strongly, a sense of my own existence; I was aware of myself. I was aware of the stuff of my passion — glorified, enthroned like a pictured king, a centauresque image deep-eyed and voiced, bearded, scarred from battle, with a strength beyond the strength of men, yet held for me in delicate leash, the beast enchained. It grew very solid to me during the long nights, that vision. Self-created — for it wasn't, I think, of Colonel Rangely as Colonel Rangely really was, but rather as if he had brought forth into the light something in me, a vision, image, what you will. He had opened a door for me. The room was dim, I focused my thought for light and from this focused thought came my vision, from that came truth and fact and knowledge. I learned what love was. I was alone with it and could shape it to my own pleasure; it came to my hand a very high imaginative passion indeed, and real — everything was real with a kind of reality I had never known before, the shadows on the wall, steps in the hotel corridor, and on the journey eastward the quickened landscape. All these things were part of life and life was thrown into a high relief, it was stark and bare for my sight, I was shaken with this force of life at the same time that I rejoiced in it.

And yet I feel I haven't made it clear. . . .

I've said too much — or too little — I've stumbled. And in my pride I had thought I could give the true color of my love, tame it down to black and white. I've showered it with futile words, turned and twisted this way and that for clear inspection, and yet this emotion — indubitably real and important — remains as unclucidated as ever. Perhaps

I might manage to dance it, I hear a chaffing suggestion that I whistle — what wouldn't it be to have the simple gift of the great Rangely himself? But my imaginative flights are hardly the timber for his simplicities, they had use for actions rather than emotions; and would have denied to these the reality of which I've been prating. I might have had a sudden fire — seen red — the champagne would account for that — but how from those errant sparks I could have gone on — simplicity balks. Colonel Rangely himself would have been the last to understand. There was the girl at Gaudalajara, the woman at South Platte, their fires were fed, and therefore plausible — they didn't reach out emptily. There was the fair pretty child — but to her had been accorded a fullness of love, hulking and awkward, not to be shaped. She had known sacrifice and pain. own pain was vague, the stretching emptiness, a troubled baffled sense, vaguely, a desire to possess, unsatisfied. sacrifice was sleep well spared. . . .

I wrote a line of thanks for the roses and paid a visit of ceremony upon Mrs. Jebb.

Our respectively social and theatric talents were set to a beautiful effect of ease. We spoke — easily — of the frustrated tea party — but regret was more than atoned by the pleasure given an old man.

To see it like that showed the high filial devotion, but would others, less illumined, have the same high regard?

Assuredly — Colonel Rangely's eccentricities were so well known. . . . There was a moment — a fluttered lid — I hovered at the edge of meaning. Ease was regained.

No mention was made of a second meeting, I put away from me my restless thought of it, voiced my appreciation of

every one's kindness. More broadly—touched upon kindness, home, the roving life of the actress. But I left with my vision dimmed. Then Mrs. Cassagryer had been with me, but it was alone that I later drove along the Lake Shore, thrilling beneath the lightly curtained windows of Mrs. Jebb's house.

I saw young men with new eyes, looking for the thing in them which could compare — not finding it — balancing youth with age — speculative, unquiet. I was preoccupied in the midst of a moving world, unmindful at street crossings, and grave or gay at illogical moments.

I didn't reveal myself to Mrs. Cassagryer. There always have been things we haven't said, and in this case speech would have been difficult. I remember her on the night of the eventful Sunday sitting well in the corner of the cab and talking brightly of divers matters, seeming to abstract herself both physically and mentally, conducting herself with remarkable tact in the presence of a difficult situation. it was a difficult situation. One's charge absents herself for many hours in the company of a famous warrior who is nevertheless assured to be harmless — the assurance in itself casting doubt; the hours reach on to dinner and through into the evening — the charge returns very late and slightly dazed, bids to her hostess an inadequate word of apology and farewell, and for the rest volunteers nothing. Rebuke would fall short, would at any rate be obvious; Mrs. Cassagryer preferred to ignore my indiscretion, her own discretion the better part—the right attitude, unerring. She knew, I think, more than she said; she gave me a contemplative eye at times and talked — abstractly — of the everlasting mystery of the human character.

In the course of our journey eastward, both on train and steamer — we had a season in London — Mrs. Cassagryer had a good deal to talk about of this abstract sort. She considered the human character in all its many sides, the low with the high, the God with — but I refused to be used as an experimental note book on which to scribble phrases. her only fault, that she has the abominable literary trick of rehearsing her newer thought, licking it into shape, regardless of the suffering listener, wholly for the benefit of her own listening and critical ear. As she was at such pains to explain to my father, she is a writer before she is anything else. She took my affair with the colonel a little in that spirit. I suspect it of having been grist to her mill; she believed and honestly — in giving the human character freedom to develop its wonders. Yet what could she have done? My imaginations were my own, the evil was wrought — if evil there was — before she drove with me back to our hotel.

The voyage was dark with April storms, threshing rains and spray, and great curving waves through which the ship cut her path doggedly. The ship's officers, smothered in oilers, had storm-beaten faces that reminded me of my love. I remember the contrast, as it struck me, between the elements of sky and sea and wind and the highly warmed and upholstered protection from these afforded by the cabins and saloons — a luxurious oasis in the midst of space. There were many of us on board who hardly knew of the existence of the elements — especially the great one through which we plowed — save for a veiling of mist against the outer glass of a closed porthole. Countless letters were written, games played, acquaintances made, and for the rest the problem of nourishment had an undue prominence. The

well ate interminably, — sandwiches, bouillion, tea, — long elaborate meals; while the sick — but I find it difficult to sufficiently dress my meaning. Stewards bestirred in the service of both. Katie succumbed, but Mrs. Cassagryer and I were both among the fortunate; we lay in our steamer chairs wrapped in rugs, or played cribbage in the cabin, a game of which my friend was extremely fond. "Fifteen-two, fifteen-four, fifteen-six and two are eight and one for his nibs —" I remember her always creditable count delivered staccato and clear, and my ear better tuned to fundamental scores. I discovered vague memories in the booming voice of the sea, and the throb of great engines sung to me through the night.

For I still had my passion with me, I still gave myself to that high communion. The rest of life was colored by it, translated into its own terms, and during this week of the voyage there was no daily balance-wheel of work. I became more and more enwrapped, my energies — usually tamed by the strenuous nature of my labors—were like stabled horses, and too restive for easy control. If Colonel Rangely had been near then, why Mrs. Cassagryer might have had good cause for alarm. But he was not, and the thing I had made in his image was set too high for dislodgment — volcanic, I yet was safe. I looked at men — I got as far as that — I don't mean I made eyes at them, but rather studied them covertly, as worth that pains. There were slim ones, sharp and hard, unctious fat ones, and, betwixt and between, a type with remarkably snug coat collars. They all treated me with an elaborate respect which I nevertheless distrusted; but high and safe in my imaginative stronghold I didn't interfere with their little politenesses—and diversion was mutual. I would never pretend that it wasn't. Sex hovered lightly; in a measure my pain was eased. I remember a young sailor — singularly favored of the gods — who cleaned a boat for the length of a whole morning and whom, at last, Mrs. Cassagryer ventured to address. It was an idle thing to do, but my friend has a habit of talk; she likes to see, she says, what she may discover. She bade her sailor good morning, commenting also on the roughness of the weather. He straightened his fine, close-knit back, and then turned on her an eye dull with incomprehension. He didn't speak our language. One doubted if he spoke a great deal of any language at all. My fancy played.

But for the most part I didn't go so far afield. Henry Daniells happened to be on board—the great managerial genius was ever shuttlecocking himself across seas—and out of the kindness of his heart he endeavored to enliven my voyage by a judicious selection of the unattached masculinity which the ship afforded. Himself gregarious, he pitied my loneliness at the same time that he approved my conservatism; he endeavored to mitigate the one without infringing upon the other. Mrs. Cassagryer regarded his endeavors with a certain apprehension, but yet was powerless, and I took advantage of them to the very slight extent indicated, falling far short of the expectations logically raised by my occupation and my celebrity.

The members of our company were distributed over several steamers; we didn't travel, as Daniells said, like a circus troupe. Syms was already in London, attending the early wants of "Aladdin's" successor, and some of us hadn't come at all, but had remained to form the nucleus of a No. 2 "Aladdin" company which was to go on the road in America.

Their dancer was Julia Casino, in a wonderful make-up supposed to imitate me; I had my information from Syms, who had rehearsed her; Williams remained—the original Aladdin,—and Miss Fanner still was to contribute her share of tunefulness. One hardly imagines the "Nile Boat Song" without her, so her continuance was perhaps as well. Besides, she was expensive, and I in my new contract was in a position to be expensive, too. Not that Daniells would have balked at that, but Miss Fanner and I were both stars of a magnitude to illumine separate heavens. I, then, for the new production, Miss Fanner to uphold the standard of the old. . . . Marie Van Von came with me—also Pingly, the comedian—and a host of minor personages, the best of their kind, and now scattered freely across the broad bosom of the deep.

"Rest — divert yourself — while you may," said Daniells. "Gather your roses—" He prepared me for what I had already realized, there being little space for dalliance once the forces were joined in London. I was glad of the prospect held out to me - neither dalliance nor idleness, the most exigent of fervors held in leash. "The Gnome in the Castle" would be in himself exigent; more exquisitely perfect, even, than "Aladdin," the price of this perfection would be labor unspared. Labor for every one, but for me the word stretched to encompass its meaning. . . . Daniells had a faculty for making all his people feel the difficulty and the importance of their respective tasks. But however that might be, in April an eager public would stand — or sit — "The Gnome in the Castle" couldn't fail. As reward a vacation was promised, the first I'd ever had, -mid-August at latest, said Daniells. How would I like a quiet month on the Irish coast? I could feed the cows — no, feed the pigs — milk the cows. . . . I saw the managerial eye bright with a chance photograph of Rose Carson, the milkmaid — her chosen recreation — he was ever alive to large contrasts, the striking magazine supplement. The notion bore first fruits in a spritely column marked, "Intimate Antics of Actors"; I remember it ran something in this wise: —

"Miss Rose Carson, the young dancer who is shortly to appear in 'The Gnome in the Castle,' owns a charming little farm on the Irish coast whither she flees from the glare of the footlights. Her favorite occupation is milking the cows, of which she owns two splendid Guernseys. . . ."

My colleague and fellow-passenger, Miss Van Von, early got wind of the thing. "What's this I hear about milking cows? Oh, Lor' — you milking cows!" She gave the laugh that was worth to her in general figures some \$10,000 a year. She was among those who had succumbed, but as the voyage drew to a close she recovered sufficiently to appear above decks, her agreeable bulk incased in checks which would have delighted the heart of Syms. She wore a boy's cap, insufficient cover to her blondness, carried a gold chain purse, and - more covertly - a dog whom, law had it, was given over to the tender mercies of the butcher. The dog yapped audibly and protruded beadlike eyes. I think he indulged in a sort of secret warfare with his mistress's negro maid. Notwithstanding the prefix, Miss Van Von had a husband and two overgrown girls of children who met her vociferously at the pier. Van Von endearments drowned steam whistles and the straining of derricks. "My own lambs — Ida — Grace — and well, Charlie! How are you?"

"Mommer!—" "Aren't they the precious ones? Aren't they?—" There came the familiar click of the reporting camera.

I was met by my father. "Rosie — you've taken another sprout! Why, you're almost human."

XVIII. MORE HUMANITY

NEVERTHELESS, "The Gnome in the Castle" did fail. That is to say, a great deal of money and labor and brains was put into it and that money and labor and brains had in the end very little to show for itself. One of the causes of this waste was our American war with Spain, which broke out at the time of its production. It will be remembered that the English weren't sympathetic with us; in consequence they were predisposed against all American effort; they made Daniells and me suffer for what was no fault or in a sense no concern of ours. I remember the feeling of failure in the air as soon as the curtain was up; I remember dancing, as it were, against it, and the murmur that came to me from the pit — "She's a Yank — a bloomin' Yank — a Spaniard killer —" and then a voice, protesting — "But she's our Rosie just the saime — shut yer —— 'ead!" and the smile I threw in that direction. Still a murmur — "She's a Yank, I si—" and a stamping of feet. In less primitive parts of the house dim faces were turned towards me, not eagerly, but judicially. "You don't mind," said Daniells, in the wings, and ignored a curtain call of doubtful intent. The whole thing was a mistake.

But it wasn't all a national animosity. "The Gnome" was weighed on its merits and found wanting. It was too exquisite, too what the French call curieux; London demanded something less difficult. Some of the critics and

a few private citizens here and there came forth conspicuously with praise, but there was a distinctive something that rubbed wrong, an irritation. . . . Daniells ought to have known, to have been able to foresee; he had left too much to Syms, and Syms had indulged himself too far. The strange high room of the first set, like a box put on end, the high barred windows through which all entrances were made, the climbing and crawling along the gray-striped walls, and the grotesque heads that nodded in the silences, — it aimed at fantasy and reached phantasmagoria.

"Why confine yourself to the one level—?" Syms had put the question one day when I had met him on the Embankment near Somerset House. Men had been cleaning windows, crawling on the ledge. The master of the dance hadn't forgotten — I don't think his queer retentive brain ever forgot anything which had to do with his calling — he was true to himself. I might contend that he wasn't, in this case, true to me — making me a horrible bewitched bedeviled oddity, half girl and half — through the whole six scenes — any and everything else — getting me to abandon every tradition I ever knew and not so much dance as describe cabalistic circles across strangely slanting sur-I did a dance seemingly in the air which was a technical triumph both for Syms and me. But London wasn't wholly peopled with prestidigitators — it went unsung. Perhaps I've said enough to make clear why the piece wasn't popular. Timble, the jesting critic on the Harrow, made a very clinging epigram indeed about the nightmare of a very esthetic person who had been inveigled away from his usual moderation at dinner. But in spite of failure life went on. This power of going on is something I've

never been able wholly to accept. It faces square to the eternal mysteries. . . .

It offsets, in a measure, the seemingly accidental nature of much of which life is made. It was chance, I know, that made me a dancer in the beginning — I might now be emulating the high example of old Makaroff's daughter — a family — six children — something like that — and when you get to the beginnings, why, I might never have been born at all. But at any rate, Colonel Rangely was chance — at least for me — and the failure of the "Gnome" was largely chance, and chance — the chance of railroads — took my father to New York and me with him instead of to the Irish coast.

There had been another failure after "The Gnome in the Castle" — we didn't seem to be able to redeem ourselves at all — and then by the courtesy of Daniells I went back to my old trick of individual matinees. Syms and I reveled — we were the ornament of the later London season. was at the end of that I came to New York with my father. Mrs. Cassagryer visited a maiden sister in Colchester, Essex; her novel was in its last throes; she would have time in Colchester and mental space to give it its final turn. And meanwhile my father would have me all to himself — his old Rosie — no dancing nonsense — no celebrity. It would be as it was in the old days, before the flood, as he called it. One would have thought, to hear him talk, that I had spent my childhood altogether enwrapt in paternal care, that he had watched over my crib at night, tended my footsteps by day, and that the stage had torn me from his protecting arms.

But I didn't mind the perspective of the years treating

me so well, and we sailed away—just he and I and Katie—a family quite touchingly united. We rented a cottage on Long Island for the months of August and September near enough the city for my father to go back and forth. I remember him rushing off in the morning to catch the early train, and he was almost always home for dinner. Part of the morning I spent in practicing; and there were days when I went to town, shopping and having tea and doing all the things feminine and suburban which I'd never before had the chance of. But most of the time was lazed away out under the great curved sky.

I remember long low dunes, on the one side the sea, on the other level lands cut and recut by paths and roads and houses. I remember a field, plowed and kept fallow, with the last furrow smoking from the blade, and the figure of a boy who bent his back to labor, and big black horses against the sun. It was the kind of labor I should like to have done myself. Back from the sea towards the center of the island were some market gardens and dairies that daily sent their product to New York. The near presence of the dairies was as near as I came to milking cows; but I used to watch them being driven down the road at the end of the day in clattering mooing cavalcade, or see them scattered and grazing in their wide inclosures and note the curve of a thick stretching neck. The words animal and beast, in any human application, have become unpleasantly narrowed by usage; but even the most domesticated and stupid of the animals has a whole-souled way of throwing itself into the action of the moment which we immortals might do well to copy. The cow with stretched neck is a lesson for the spiritual. Some of us still retain this beast faculty of

giving ourselves completely over; dancing does—or should—carry it to an art, reach down through stiltifications and worldly reserves. I, as a dancer, watched the cows and would have liked to have talked to Syms. For I thought about my dancing more than I had in the tumult of its actual accomplishment. I was full of new plans for it, and ideas. I had been forced forward without time to think for myself, and now I had all the time there was; my original fertility—embarrassed by flourish of trumpets—now, in the solitude, fought for space. It would have been a period for Syms and difficulties. Instead, I twiddled restless thumbs.

All this preamble merely to show how it isn't men that breed history, but history—situations—conditions—that breed men to meet them.

Into this prepared soil — prepared for work, fit by the way for play — was rooted a letter from Valentine Seymour. She was away, spending the end of summer with friends along the St. Lawrence, but she had a plum for me which would quite make up to me for her absence. Had I ever heard her mention Barney Grant? When we'd come to Shoreham — that was the name of our abode — it seemed as though we must have done so merely because Barney Grant was there. No — she wouldn't accuse me of that she knew how I hated men — but I must be nice to this one. She stated baldly that he was handsome. And he wasn't a special beau of hers, a friend rather of Penny Black's — Penny, by the way, had enlisted in the war and returned crowned with honors. She shouldn't be jealous, I could do with him what I pleased. She'd taken the extreme liberty of sending him a note of introduction which he might present at my door at any moment, for of course it went without saying he was dying to know me. Valentine's communication was most characteristically Valentine, she had the happy faculty possessed often by moderately literate people of writing exactly as she talked. That I should make the acquaintance of Mr. Grant seemed both urgent and imminent, though with explanation of the urgency confused.

And curiously—idle as I was, with energy turned back upon itself—I found that I was looking forward to a visit which evidently wasn't to be rashly paid. I waited, and found no surprise in my ready acceptance of a generosity I had refused from my friend again and again. I thought of Colonel Rangely, and this was one more man who might be like him; with Colonel Rangely to color it Shoreham would have been perfect, and failing him one might take what one could get. From ever harping at the same strain, Valentine had at last struck it right for me.

Katie announced Mr. Grant's arrival. I had been sitting on the little upstairs porch playing with a cat I had newly acquired, and trying to become interested in a story in a magazine. I'd been for a walk, spent an hour on the beach, seen the last mail, and changed my clothes; nothing remained but the sheer loveliness of the afternoon, and loveliness for its own sake didn't sufficiently meet my exactions. Frankly I was bored. I played with the cat, who understood me completely and toyed condescendingly with the spool of silk we had between us hopelessly snarled; I went into my father's room and got one of his cigarettes, but I didn't like it. It made me cough; I had rather hoped it would make me sick; I wouldn't have minded being sick just for the

diversion of the thing. I read in the papers of the New York roof gardens; Daniells might permit me a short engagement in the one in which he had a part control. I had some vague but appalling ideas. . . . And then Katie announced Mr. Grant. I welcomed him. I should have welcomed the devil himself, and Valentine's young man wasn't in the least devilish, but disappointingly young and undefiled; his immaculateness was more than a matter of white flannel trousers. Yet Valentine was right, he filled the eye.

He was tall and slim and dark and, as he talked, not so young as he at first appeared. Twenty-five or six, perhaps, properly mannered and witted, with a firm hand-clasp and a voice which would sing baritone. I don't remember the detail of that visit, except the way the young man looked—there was a good deal of mutual inspection—and a few things which were said here and there. We sat in the parlor at first, and then I suggested we move to the piazza where it was cooler. He held open the long French window for me with a graceful deference. I remember wondering if he were in the habit of paying court to celebrated dancers.

We of course spoke of Valentine. Neither of us ourselves ill-favored, we agreed that to be as good looking as that was quite too uncanny. I knew her very well indeed, Barney Grant hadn't the pleasure; and just because his acquaintance with her was so slight it was all the more charming of her to think of him on this occasion, not to say what it was of me to receive him. . . . But I've made him sound unpleasantly smooth and ingratiating, which wasn't at all the impression he conveyed. His ceremony

and his respect were perfectly simple; he wasn't forever saying to himself that he treated me like this to flatter me, though it wasn't the way Rose Carson ought to be treated; I didn't see in his eyes the held reflection of my Gitana.

At dinner I told my father about him.

- "A friend of Valentine Seymour's, hey? Is he coming again?"
 - "I think so."
- "Well—it's only natural he should. It's a wonder to me you don't have the place overrun with fellows. You must be uncommon sharp with 'em."
 - "You don't mind —?"
 - "Mind what?"
 - "His coming again?"
- "If I did mind, it would make a devil of a lot of difference, wouldn't it?" he laughed. And then, "Why hasn't he been off fighting for his country? If he'd done as well as young Black—"

I felt very much on my old perch—the edge of possibility—with this seraphic young man who had appeared so exactly at the right moment. The time, the place, and the loved one—hardly that—I wouldn't go so far as that—but we might see. . . . I wrote to Valentine, saying her friend had called, and I was glad he had, as Shoreham was dull—which circumspection I sealed with the clear conscience of truth-telling. What more could I have said without saying more than I knew?

XIX. MAGNIFICAT

It was three days before I saw the young man again. I remember, because it was three days to Saturday, and on Saturday morning I came upon him playing ball with some boys on the beach. He stopped and joined me. We played together — ball and, I think, other things. I could throw swift and run straight. I remember the ball in the sun glistening wet from the sea, to whose edge it kept rolling — myself hot in pursuit. He found I set a pace. "I never knew a girl who could, you know, like that."

"It's the thing I'm supposed to do—" Laughter was clear.

We swam, too. We clambered to a raft moored near shore and held deep converse. Katie watched us from the shore. Barney Grant called her the sea dragon and asked if she were there to protect me from the dangers that lurked. He supposed I was such a conspicuous person I had to have some one. I accused him of being jolly at my expense. Never — but he warned me he should take her place. When he could, that was to say, Saturdays and Sundays and after the afternoon train got in — when he could and if he might His smile disclosed teeth even and white.

I noted that, and the thickness of his hair, and his eyes black like black cloth. I told him once that his eyes reminded me of the shoe buttons toy animals affect. But then I knew him better and we both dared more; at the first our flippancy had bounds. We were guarded — ten-

tative — we had the shy heedful step of dreamers who dread to wake. Our pleasantries were for the most part soft, our moments of wildness hushed by the fear of our own temerity. We played together and talked, we watched each other in the silences, I — I know — in the frank delight of beauty; but the pleasure we had in each other was far from the surface of our talk and our companionship — and for that a greater contrast to the later bald avowals and the naked heart of youth.

Our meetings didn't go on at three-day intervals. Daily we met, between the early train and dinner, and again in the evening, when the far end of the piazza would be accented by the glow of my father's cigar and the surf sounded close. The lights of the cottages gleamed through the evening mist and a man in the house next door had some skill with the banjo. His wife sang:—

"As long as the Congo, flows to the sea—
As long as the leaf grows, on the bamboo tree—
My love and devotion, will be de-ep as the o-ocean,"—

They gave us also selections from "Aladdin." Couples strolled — white figures in the dimness; sometimes we strolled too. Down the steps we went, through the gate in the boxwood hedge, and up to the turn in the fair white road, then to where the sea itself lay dark at our feet and the little white-edged waves crept back and forth. I remember stranded seaweed and the scent of it mixed with the salt. And everywhere men and women, boys and girls, scattered two and two — everywhere lovemaking — I noted with a growing consciousness, and the weary or the commonplace was glorified equally with the rest.

I have said that the early London years have been in a

sense the happiest I've known. I still hold them so. But for weeks — sheer wonder of days and nights — Shoreham stands comparison — happiness couldn't go beyond. . . . I loved. It's an admission I recall having made before, one which I shall have the felicity of making again, but what matter is that? I didn't love Barney Grant any the less for it. And Barney Grant was young. Now he stands out to me as young. I have said we played together and talked, but most of all we were young together, and we loved because we were young. We loved in the manner of youth — incompletely; there was much we never knew — we were young fools, young fools, — at twenty-eight I say it. And sometimes I feel in looking back, in examining close and bit by bit, that we knew more of love — Barney Grant and I together — than ever I've known since.

I sit here now, at twenty-eight, with roses about me, the mid-summer town disguised in their fragrance, Cerberus asleep at my elbow, the clock speeding towards the hour of my labors — I sit here and I think of irrecoverable things. . . .

Have you ever as a child read an exquisite fairy story, or — later — a poem, or heard a piece of music, or at night waked to the sound of wind in pine trees? You hold afterwards a sort of abstraction of beauty, an impression remote and vivid at the same time, you have seen or heard what is not of the common clay. I might return again to my metaphor of dreamers and dreams. Our love had a quality of all that, it had a bloom I fear to rub, an inspiration to be marred by the pen's uninspired scratch. I can't set it down in any decent order, clear in black and white; I don't altogether wish to. It began as I have said, filled my idle-

ness, contained possibilities of amusement of which I'd never before had the right chance. Then I liked the fellow — we liked each other — and bringing to this liking forces imaginative and material, we loved. And our love was colored by our youth and our beauty and the fundamental purity of our hearts. Nature was close — sky and sea — it was tamed to our need, gave us golden days and silvery nights, the sun shone for us through the waves we threaded, and the tide left the sand smooth for our roving feet. It was all like this - for us, and for us alone. It's the sense which as I write comes up to me most from the veil of the years — the sense I had of an absolute possession of nature. I've known the other and perhaps the deeper thing, to be myself possessed — but I hold this first to be nearer the god. I say, us, our need, the waves we threaded. There were times, I think, when everything was wholly me and mine — even Barney Grant himself was mine, a creation of my own sense and my own brain, the more so that I clasped his hand among the salt spray, or watched the swing and stride of him coming up the path in the moonlight.

He loved me, he went so far in proof of it as to offer me his name and life; but it wasn't for his love that he was mine, it wasn't that I held him in the hollow of my two hands. He was mine as all the rest was — some power in me, of brain or sense, perhaps a soul set once magnificently free. I fall, I blunder, I fail the truth of what I try to give. But I cling to this — it comes up clear now — that once through love, young and halting and incomplete, I possessed the world and all that lay within it. I possessed it as fully as a conqueror drunk with power or a poor lunatic thinking himself the Lord. . . .

We sat in the dune grass, a Sunday it was, and the noon blazed at us through fog, things were shimmery—like dreams—and bells rang: the bell-buoy offshore and church bells in the village. This that I've been trying to make clear was strong upon me then: "The world, Barney, the whole world, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea—all yours and mine—all at our feet—"

"But the birds aren't at our feet —"

"At our heads, then. . . . You don't understand—you're part of it."

"Am I?"

"Yes, and you're my own true love — say it."

"Your own true love — and what do you say for that?"

"I love you. But you know it —"

"I know it — oh, my dear!"

"Call me Rose."

"Rose, Rose of the world, Rose of Sharon — tell me, who was the Rose of Sharon? What was it — a flower — what?"

There's something else I hold to now — an immense gratitude I have — that outweighing regret for whatever of love was missed. It can be left such a mangled thing, there is so much which doesn't bear the thinking. My gratitude is for Barney Grant's investing charm, a sort of beneficence he had. I have said that he was mine, self-made and self-created. He was what I chose that he should be; not, of necessity, weak or yielding; sometimes altogether masculine and domineering. There were times when he barred my path, when, if he was my own creation, I had created better than I knew, — but that was all part of it. The straighter, the firmer he stood up in this world which was mine, the bigger a world it was for me.

He barred my path; the wonder was that he didn't bar all other paths but the one which led to the church door.

"When are you going to marry me, Rose?"

I boggled. "We mustn't think of that — yet." It was a door which seemed to me quite outside the picture; I was vague and didn't reckon with it at all.

"You know," he said to me one day, "all this celebrity, — you're not so very famous, — that would be forgotten."
"Never!"

He seemed, strangely, to reassure me. "Oh, yes, it would!" And once, — I remember the dulled sheen of the moon in the water, — "This can't go on forever!"

"What?"

"Shilly-shallying." He had an angular moment, and then: "Some men—" He reflected. "But I couldn't do that."

"Why not?" I asked, and was less honorable than he. But he took it for my greater youth; I didn't understand; it wouldn't be square. . . .

"Besides, that isn't all. I want you always." He would have liked to have broken me to his need. I think he was prey to fancies: me tamed — domestic — gracing a breakfast table, in flowered muslin; the stage a past thing, merely atmospheric in its sway.

But for the rest he was, as I say, what I chose that he should be. As I think, impressions crowd. I remember the planned occasion of a dawn fishing, my father lending fitness. I rose when the horned moon was brilliant like a jewel in the black night sky, a jewel in a lady's black hair. We went with lanterns as the sky paled, and Barney Grant awaited us on the beach. We rode high in a rose glow; the

first gleam of the sun was flashed from our dipping oars. We circled the sea with nets: my father some great Norse viking bending to an humble task, and my lover and I a lesser breed, but yet sufficiently splendid.

It will be seen this love that we had was rather of flesh than of spirit. A lean flesh it was and fine-cut bone, Barney Grant had a delicate, questioning brow and a mouth straight and hard, — all these things were part of love the way his hair grew back from his forehead and would have waved if it hadn't been cut so short, the set of his shoulders, and the line of the back of his neck and head. It was a sheer power of beauty. With that came the dream quality and spirit might not have been altogether lacking, a frank delight of the eye, flesh at its highest. There were times when beauty was so sharp to me that I felt my strength ebbing out, I wilted in a supreme perception. And my love translated my own beauty for me as celebrity never had done; even for Colonel Rangely I hadn't seen it so. We used to talk of Colonel Rangely, and one morning I read of his death in the paper. It was curiously unreal to me, and in the midst of my peace and love and happiness as much a part of war as the troops that came straggling back all that later summer. It will be remembered how the transports had landed at Montauk, where the sick were cared for; all Long Island hummed, a humming, I'm afraid, I barely heard for the one more tuneful in my ears. I remember it as a background; that, with the sea and the sky and Colonel Rangely, - his death with his life, the flashing moment when it had crossed with mine, — was also of a distant value. I don't excuse myself. I say his death was unreal to me, but I think Barney was relieved in

his mind. Intuitively he knew that there had been an emotion.

"He was so old, Rose; an old man—and one leg shot off in a frontier fight—"

It was true the obituary notices spoke of his having been broken in health for years prior to his death. Many women could boast the distinction of being the first woman in a man's life; it was somewhat rarer to have been the last. I told Barney this. . . .

"But you weren't 'in his life,' Rose!"

"Ah, my dear, you're jealous, — jealous of a man who's dead and gone —"

"And why shouldn't I be jealous? I want you for my-self always—every inch of you, every thought and breath—"

I looked straight into his flushed intensity. "And if I felt like that for you, how unhappy I should be!"

But for himself he'd put whatever of what I meant well behind him. He'd been through the experiences of life and come out, at twenty-six, quite unscathed. He was for me a boy always; he had the precious gift of enthusiasm; he lent himself. I have said he would have broken me to his need; I think it was I more often who would have broken him.

I remember when I was crazed with the power I had over him: the dark slim head, the eyes and mouth, the whole long reach that seemed to me so utterly mine, — and then reacting heights of gentleness. Because he was so mine was cause to be the more tender. I knew blind fear, unreasoning worry for his safety. The Long Island Railroad seemed to me an ever present danger; so the Wall Street ferry, and the city street crossings didn't bear thinking of. I pictured

my love torn and bleeding; his uninjured presence filled me with an excitement of relief, I felt the air alive with shouting triumph. And when I was most happy, it was then I would be most grave and still; it was a different feeling altogether from that which had made me dance for the Lord of War.

I have given this love of mine a largeness, as if it occupied years of time, while in reality the moonlit nights and sunstreaked days were very numbered. Looking over old jottings, I find that Barney Grant came to call on me on the twentieth day of August. A week discovered our passion, mid-September found its zenith,—summer lingering for us. But the actual time of the thing didn't matter; the platitude of that hardly needs mention. We had starlight, too, and afternoons with little clouds a-tremble; we swam neck to neck through rolling seas and saw through the breaking wave the shimmer of water upward. We lunched, more or less surreptitiously, in town, playing at domesticity across the little white cloth of a restaurant table, and Barney had a tremendous sentiment and sense of privilege about providing me with sustenance.

"You know you're even more adorable in town than you are in the country. It's the hat, I think; something,—I swell with pride,—we must be worthy. What do you like? I wish I knew. . . . Grapefruit, chicken breasts,—they do them wonderfully here. What salad? It comes to me suddenly who you are, you know, you're Rose Carson. Be Rose Carson just this once, and then it will strike in at me that besides being Rose Carson you're my Rose, too!"

[&]quot;Le mari de la diva?"

[&]quot;Ah, don't! It's not a joke."

"Nothing's a joke, my dear; everything's deadly solemn, and the most solemn thing of all is the fact of you and me!"

"It's frightful, it's appalling. . . . What's that the orchestra is playing?"

"My dance — the nautch. Hear the temple gongs?"

"Did you dance in a temple?"

"No, but the occidental mind would miss the subtilty."

"Aren't you wise when you talk like that? I wonder if I love Rose Carson as much as I do Rose? Rose Carson is such a great lady, so wise, so beautiful, so far above me—"

"And Rose is neither wise nor beautiful nor above you?"

"Ah — she is! But she's mine."

I sometimes think he believed I was his quite as I believed he was mine. I went on, "Then Rose Carson is not yours at all?"

"How could I flatter myself? If I were old and very, very rich, with houses and yachts and horses and a wisdom like the wisdom of the serpent; if I had great coffers of gold and impressive white-haired butlers, footmen, and perky little maids with bows in their caps,—if I were as I say then Rose Carson—little Rose, the dancer—might be the jewel in the crown!"

"What a horrible idea."

"It is, isn't it? Forgive me. But you'll admit it would be a fine thing to be one's self so great that you were the little Rose — you in all your glory. I'd hang you with jewels and I'd put you in a glass case, — no, a case of cut crystal, — and then sometimes I'd take you out of the case and order you to dance, and if I liked the way you danced —"

"And when you tired?"

[&]quot;Tired?"

"Of me. Then what?"

"Oh, then I'd give you a very magnificent funeral. You'd be led through the streets all laid out on a great processional catafalque, gilded and carved and laden with flowers — red roses. Twelve white horses hung with sable —"

"And then what would you do?"

"I'd take the little dagger that you always wore — did you know, the little dagger I had given you with the emeralds in the handle? — I'd take it and I'd thrust it deep into my own heart. Then we'd together tread the Elysian fields — "

There was an affinity — for me indissoluble — between places of public dining and Elysian fields. In the one environment the other seemed always to rise imminent. "It's rather fine," I said.

"Fine?"

"Yes, all you've been saying, — you and I, — me in a crystal case, the little Rose!"

"Ah, it's not fine, — it's true!"

That evening — we were again at Shoreham — still held to itself the color of our talk. I was quite consciously small and slight, even, I remember, to some heelless slippers that I wore and drummed with on the piazza railing. I had a bath in the salt, a rubdown, a nap, and then dinner. I was what the trainers call fit to a degree when fitness was a distinct emphatic thing, part peace, part disquiet, a contentment with stirred depths. I could have danced; I think I could have fought, — even loved. But I did none of these things. My love was obscured by a sort of earthly haze, the dream and beauty were gone; it might have been a different kind of beauty. Barney fondled me, loveless, soulless. I felt the strength of his folding arm and saw very

vividly, through the open door, the parlor's lighted interior, the little draped piano set catacornered, the magazines and papers on the table, the Morris chair my father often sat in. But to-night my father had stayed in town; we had everything to ourselves, and it was this unwonted emptiness which at last drove us to the beach, where emptiness was less marked and rare.

We stood for a while at the end of the pavilion before we went down the steps to the sand. The night was black and hot, and a warm wind blew in our faces; we heard the surf rather than saw it, and at the turn where the ocean meets the bay, the Shoreham Light flashed bright. We walked together abreast, I silent, — not so much from lack of subject as from a chaotic weight of it. The atmospheric stir, the heat and wind and darkness, was for me too; I felt myself blind and clung to my lover. Yet he seemed powerless enough, and I — the little Rose. We both were powerless, insignificant in the face of surrounding greatness.

"What's the matter, Rose?"

"Nothing." And then, moved by an impulse less passionate than it was histrionic, I sat down under the lee and made love. A pretty philandering, meeting of lips, twining of hands; the two young heads bent close, — Barney Grant's smooth, my own with the hair fallen down about my face. We were weak, powerless, the world was no longer mine; but with my will set to power I brought it back to me; with my lips and hands and the whole weight of me that leaned so soft in the circle of a man's arm I called back reality, and so, through the outer, reached the inner sense.

It seemed after that evening as though things had changed between us, some of the glory was gone, the freshness rubbed. And yet it was an evening having little to mark it from others; its very similarities and repetitions might have given us sight of the end of the count. Before, there had been no end, no future; it had been sufficiently good to live wholly in the present; now the present hardly sufficed the future lack. Marriage loomed. Barney became insistent and at last went to my father, who disapproved but left it to me; I found myself engaged. It was a time of a general forcing of issues.

It was very beautiful to me, thus having definitely promised myself. I had a sense of laying my life in Barney's hands, giving myself as I never had done. Every caress was merely a pledge and a promise; there were futures and vistas undreamt. But that was short-lived.

There was a letter from Daniells reminding me of some autumn bookings; Syms had matters for my attention and was sailing for New York; dancing called. And it seemed my young man expected me to give it up. A day of argument brought him round from anything so sudden, however. I was under contract to Daniells; large sums of money were involved; he compromised, and afterwards he would I felt also that I myself would see; the idea of really giving up dancing never once entered my head. But I was calm and lived again in my love; and then I had an hour of panic in which the future shone very clear to me — our disagreements, our miscomprehensions of one another. met Barney's train and walked back with him from the station, telling him at every step how I couldn't possibly marry him, and how everything was quite over and dead. He answered me by inviting himself to dinner; he came in and took possession of my parlor to await the hour of the

meal. He had an element of greatness I hadn't reckoned with before; he had created a situation which had to be met. I went upstairs to my room.

Katie, with her exaggerated neatness, was setting things to rights, but I turned her out in the midst of her task. I delved deep in trunk bottoms, and, my delving rewarded, I arrayed myself — inadequately — in the gauze and silver of the dance, ankles bare and garlanded, arms bound with gold, slim young bosom weighted with pendants, and gleaming white in contrast to the tan of throat and face. I have no excuse for what I did except that I wasn't myself; the stress and strain of the past days had unbalanced me a little, made it seem quite right and proper that I should thus make a show of myself. It answered my lover's disapprovals; if he didn't like me as a dancer, he would have the chance now of seeing exactly why. I went down to him, a lamb to the sacrifice. He was sitting in the Morris chair looking over some papers he had evidently taken from his pocket; he looked up at my entrance, then rose.

"Good God!" he said, "what are you doing like that?" The situation was saved by our mutual solemnity.

"You see you can't marry me now." I met the interrogation of his brows. "You can't marry a girl who would be so bold and brazen — you can't!"

"You do look rather gay. Hadn't you better put some more clothes on?"

"It's what I wore all winter."

"It's a wonder you weren't cold. . . ." And then, as I still waited, bangled as I was and rendered up defenseless to the searching daylight, "If you won't go, I'll see that you do!" I was surprised by the sudden vehemence of the words,

they sounded a threat; I smelt combat — which I'd had little enough of lately — and stood my ground.

"Where shall I go?" I asked.

Barney was inarticulate, but found expression in action. He walked over to me, picked me up, and carried me upstairs. I remember, from his arms, the figure of Katie petrified on the landing. He asked her the way to my room. A door was open, and she could only nod her head. He marched straight in and laid me on my little white bed.

"Now dress!" he said. He went out, leaving me to my own unprofitable devices.

I heard my father come in, his greeting to Barney, and presently his voice: "Rose, Barney's here."

"Yes, I know it; I'll be right down." The which I hadn't at all intended.

I had done as Barney had said, and when I at last presented myself, no one could have found fault with my attire or lack of it. But my mentor seemed yet unsatisfied. "All that fal-lal," he said. I looked down at the perfection of my frills. "What's the matter with it?"

"I didn't mean that, but the other — dancing — fal-lal —"
For a moment, as I looked at him, it really seemed as though
what he said were right. Dancing and everything else beside was nonsense — must be nonsense — except the glory
and the youth of Barney Grant himself. Nothing else
mattered or counted or even existed. I loved him more then
than I ever had done before, and I had thought I could give
him up. He was the most desirable thing I had ever known,
and I at the very beginning of knowledge. That evening
love flared for us. I remember, — but my pen fails me as it
has failed me all along. I've given the imperfections their

semblance of reality, but the higher moments I haven't been able quite to take; I remember, but my remembrance—the sharpest reality of it—loses too much in the transcribing. I fall back again on the mere superficial things easily patent and transcribable—my lover's voice, the touch of his hand, his youth that was never so clear and fresh as now that he had shown his unreckoned greatness. I found I also had qualities unreckoned, the possibility of complete blind worship; it would have filled my momentary need if I might have followed him through trackless snows, my feet bleeding, my shoulders bowed. I longed for the splendors of sacrifice, all except the one thing, dancing; of that I didn't care to think.

"No," I said, "not now; some other time, — we'll have it all out between us, just how you feel about it and why I should or shouldn't give it up —"

"To-morrow, then?"

"Yes."

"Ah, no, not to-morrow; I forgot. My uncle's coming down and I'll have to be with him. I don't believe I've ever told you,—my mother's younger brother, he's the Great Mogul of the lot of us,—but we've always had so much else to talk about—"

"What has he done that's so great?" I put forth an intelligent curiosity.

"Money and brains and general worldly wisdom. I met him to-day down town, and he said that living alone here at the Country Club as I was, I probably needed looking after. He's coming down."

"He sounds like a prying old woman!"

"No one ever accused Simon Featherly of being anything like that!"

"Simon Featherly?" Perhaps my memory tricks me, or perhaps, in the ordinary course, I had heard of Simon Featherly before; but it seems to me that his name as we said it had a very insistent familiarity; it startled, then haunted. The hissing s and liquid l, and feather — I thought of a close-feathered hawk. Wasn't there a Sir Simon de Montfort of medieval annals, a Norman baron and the Battle of Evesham Plain? — romance as well as the sibilant.

XX. THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP SEA

As I scan the latter pages of this chronicle its strikes me that there's been a deal of unseemly leaping from one passion to another; and aspects of love, however various, should, for the sake of contrast, be given decent space; hyperbole has limitations. But all along my aim has been, not seemliness or contrast or even literature, but a presentation of the life I've seen and the life I've led; and in spite of theatrical tendencies life with me hasn't been wholly a matter of art. However, I save the face of things a little by not reckoning Simon Featherly among the lists of love. It's been with him a somewhat different thing.

The uncle came, the nephew went small before my eyes. Though it was Simon Featherly's eyes, rather than mine, that figure in the count; brilliant they were, with yellow lights and the irregularity which it always took a moment to place, a segment of brown in the iris of the left. I found myself bathed in their infinite sophistication, immersed coldly in limitless wisdom.

Barney brought his uncle to see me very late on the evening he had given me to understand would be spent by the two men quite in the company of each other. I afterwards learned that the visit followed a rather bitter discussion.

Mr. Featherly had heard of the thing which was likely to happen and had come to Shoreham to take care of his nephew's interests; it was what he had meant when he told him that he needed looking after. Once on the scene he explained the

object of his arrival, explained — also — the impossibility of marrying a young woman who danced on the public stage. However beautiful and however celebrated she might be, it didn't matter; in fact, the more extraordinary, the more impossible! I don't know why he had come out so flatfooted; it wasn't a characteristic attitude, and he might have foretold that my young man would rise stanch in my defense. But, of course, I never have known exactly what it was that was said, and so can't judge. I myself take up the thread at the hour — very late for a call, nearer ten than nine — when I heard the gate click and looked to see Barney holding it open for a man who paused halfway and threw his lighted cigar back into the road he had turned from. He came on up the path, swinging a slender cane. The cast cigar and the firm grasp in which he held his cane might have denoted an intention quite ominous. At least Mr. Featherly was prepared for action, even though it proved but the pacific one of passing judgment upon his nephew's choice. The evening was warm, and we had been spending it on the porch, but our visitors seemed to prefer the hot bright parlor, and the next moment I was living in the mocking experience of the elder one's fixed gaze.

But it presently shifted, with all its force, to a silver-framed photograph on the table. "This is as I know you. The shadow of a white rose in a mirror of silver — why didn't the *Times* quote that?"

I was taken back with a start. "Ah — you saw the Times, you saw 'Aladdin'?"

"Yes, that first night—in London. It's how I know you," he repeated. "I never expected this other pleasure—the real Miss Carson—" It was light, beautiful, but un-

mistakable. I was a dancer, celebrated, a public character; the real Miss Carson — the girl who faced him in the glare of domestic lamps — wasn't real at all, but merely the chrysalis from which the winged thing came forth. The speech about the white rose was saved from impertinence by its very impersonality. And all the time the nephew bristled with unspoken refutations; I think I divined the whole argument between them.

My father offered the hospitality of his sideboard — an attention he rarely paid Barney alone — and talk drifted in calmer currents. Featherly touched on our kindness to his nephew, the friendly hand we'd reached him in his loneliness, — for it was lonely for a boy when his family packed off for their summers to the remoteness of the north. Barney lived at the little Shoreham Club — which wasn't overluxurious — and had in return his bathing and his exercise and forty daily miles of railway. He — Featherly — preferred the comparative comfort of his own quarters in town; but then what an immense difference there was about the constitution of comfort; with some people it was one thing, while others But Shoreham was nevertheless charming, both air and water invigorating. My father and he discussed the relative merits of fresh and salt water bathing. Barney was ill at ease, and I — looking back now, I don't know what I was. Not happy, I think, but rather confused and baffled by this new intrusive presence; and yet Simon Featherly himself had for me the same insistent familiarity his name had had before him. He struck lost chords, raised forgotten dust; I'd known him and hadn't altogether liked him, - I couldn't get away from that.

Idly I traced the resemblance between him and his nephew.

It had struck me in the first moment with the usual racial affinity, and then seemed lost among their many dissimilarities; I caught it again in the voice and manner, a neatness of build and movement, — though the elder was thicker set, — and it seems a curious thing to mention, but a very marked quality they both had of being gentlemen.

After our visitors had gone my father asked me, point blank, whether I was engaged to Barney Grant.

"Why, yes, I suppose I am. Why?"

"Don't you know?"

"Yes, I know, of course." But the more I affirmed it, the more I struggled in uncertainty. From a sure faith and a sure belief I had come to a sense that nothing was sure. "But why?" I repeated, "why do you ask?"

"Because it's plain to me that the uncle came down here to find out, and when the question is raised, you better be prepared to answer it."

I felt myself weak. "What do you think?"

"I think you're too young — you better cut it out. I've never been at all convinced that the thing would come to a head. But if you don't break it off now, you'll find yourself in a rather awkward position."

I went to bed confused in soul and dreamt brokenly of talks with Barney in which I tried vainly to explain why I couldn't marry him. I knew why myself, but I couldn't tell him, always at that point something intervened — once I woke with a start and found the dawn clearing the dimness. I lay awake and tried to think; it came clear to me that my father had been right, yet it was only in dreams that I knew . . . That dream quality, spoken of before, was very present to me; I had awaked from dreams, the chill of the

September dawn had blown them away. I key there, cold as a person might be at the end of a deathwatch, and cold I at last wept for a loss I couldn't have defined. And then I knew—it was my young lover—his loss—I wept for; for I knew I should never marry him now. And I wanted him, the Lord knew how much; tears blinded me because all in a few short seconds he had gone small by the side of another man. I wanted him still, I even loved him; and I was very far from loving Simon Featherly—suffice that I had seen him.

With the later hour and dressing there came to me the waking realization of the explanations that had haunted my dreams. I would have to tell Barney, and what should I tell him — what could I? The question pressed and I escaped its urgency by packing for New York. My father returned that evening to find the Shoreham house stripped of our treasures, and trunks in solid phalanx. I had received, conveniently, another letter from Daniells; the excuse was plausible — we would have gone at the latest in another week — and the elder Carson himself was glad to get back to the city. We cast Shoreham as migrating birds cast their nests; a line of warning to the owners, a turn of the key in the lock, windows closed, the piazza chairs overturned and huddled, and we drove to the station without a single backward look at the shelter we left. I remember that I carried the cat in a basket and Katie had my smaller dressing case, the rest of the things having gone with my father earlier in the day. On the train I wrote to Barney, giving him the name of our hotel. He called and I was out; he telephoned and I never received his message; he wrote — frantically and in reply to that I invited him to dine.

But I was in the midst of work then, Daniells had new schemes afoot, Syms's arrival was hourly expected, I was filled full of the old ambitions and the old stirs. The grand finale so dreaded never quite took place. Its reality was obscured by the brilliancy of Daniells' inner office, my problems were of Terpsichore rather than of Cupid. Even the reality of Simon Featherly himself was questionable for me in the rush of days and nights. My concern with certain things has ever been intermittent in nature—"The cup in the one hand, the Koran in the other"—so I've gone, and the pendulum had swung.

Now looking back, all that time with Barney comes real to me again, in writing of it I've been steeped in memories, and I shan't even attempt a justification of my changed attitude. Barney came to me that evening at the hotel, all happy and expectant, and without a shiver or a qualm I wiped the happiness away, I don't know how I did it. . . . I've always acted, as the naturalists say, according to type, and I showed my own full characteristic cruelty. I told him that I couldn't marry him and this time my statement must have He left me. I never gave him any excarried conviction. planation at all. He had come with the news that the high judge, his uncle, approved of me. "Not that it would make any difference if he didn't, but I'm glad —" He wasn't glad a moment later. I didn't see him again for a number of years, and then our meeting had the conscious sentiment, the strained friendliness, such meetings usually attain. It's only now, in my capacity of chronicler, that I can regard our love with an open mind — give it full measure.

The simplicity of flesh had held me. . . . And when I've said that I haven't said all—there was the dream, the

romance, youth and beauty. Why should I have kept to my promise — why should I have married and given myself, at eighteen, to the needs and ideals of a man like Barney Grant? I don't mean that he wasn't good enough for me, that he wasn't perhaps a great deal too good; but at eighteen the fullness of life was upon me; it was like the lilt of a tune that called. For a time I might have been supremely happy, but it couldn't have lasted. One imagines Barney with the smug contentment of the married man, attaining a certain comfortable roundness and boasting unbearably about the precocity of his youngest infant; or else one sees him harassed and worn, an inverted vision of hell in his eyes, and he and I lying to each other. I have regrets, too — regrets for the baby hands I've never felt in mine, the budding masculine, strong and fine, — a girl, wholly exquisite.

And meanwhile what of the god from the machine? A farewell to the nephew wasn't of necessity followed by a farewell to the uncle; and yet it might seem to imply it. Days went by and weeks and I didn't see him, but I was too busy to bother about the postponement of a meeting which I felt sure would some time take place. It was a gift which the future was keeping for me. I could very well wait. I heard of him once from Henry Daniells. . . .

It was during the first dizzy metropolitan week of "The Harvest of Folly" — more of that later — after a matinee, I remember it was, and I was hurrying to get away for an hour's rest before the evening, when Daniells came knocking at my door. There was some preamble before the point was reached; he settled himself for a chat, leaning back comfortably on the brightly covered lounge with which in all his theaters he provided the dressing rooms of his stars. He

chatted while Katie hung the garments of Folly on their predestined hooks and my dresser busied herself with some creams on the toilet table. I was pinning on a veil to hide the traces of a hastily removed make-up; with my back to him I could still see him in the cheval glass. He was smiling his childlike smile and looking at my reflection in the glass; he had always liked me, and now that his first faith in me was more and more justified he liked me even better. I raised my hands for a final pin.

- "You've got it!" said Daniells, as if in reply to my gesture.
- "Got it?"
- "A figure a cachet. There's never been anything at all like it." And then with a seeming irrelevance, "There wasn't a seat in the house."
 - "So it's going well?"
- "I have it from Moore that if the Czar of all the Russians were to stick his head in the window of that office we couldn't give him a thing. We're booked — sold out; the speculators may have something, or the agents, but the hotels have been sending up here all day and as Moore says, nothing doing — nothing." The dresser turned on him a white, expressionless countenance, and then went on screwing a bottle top; she obviously hadn't the temperament for his enthusiasm. "Now that night in New Haven," I remember his saying we had opened in New Haven — "why, I wasn't sure; but as soon as we struck New York — then I knew. Syms thinks it's he that's responsible: he struts about and he has a waistcoat — have you seen that waistcoat? Wouldn't it set the birds to singing? But I left the 'Gnome' entirely to Syms and look at the cropper! It pleased the élite, I suppose, but they didn't fill the tenth row." There was a pause

which should have been fraught with expectancy. "Speaking of the élite, I saw a friend of yours to-day—at least not a friend, but some one who's had the pleasure of meeting you, and sent you a message. What do you think I'm coming to when I carry messages from Johnnies? I, who am the object of more respect along Broadway—that was what he said,—respect—he sent you his profound ones—"

I had the tightening sense which brings the hand of the lovely heroine straight to her heart. "I should hardly call Simon Featherly a Johnny."

Daniells stared. "How did you know it was Simon Featherly?"

"He's the only man I know who'd send you trotting about with his messages — and then — profound respects — it sounds like him."

"Well, I guess you're right. I had luncheon with him at the Players' Club — you know he goes in for art when he isn't turning Wall Street into an insane asylum — and we spoke of you and your success in the 'Harvest.' He said he had met you last summer. He thinks you're very beautiful and clever — we had quite a little chat." It seemed Daniells' day for chats.

"What else did he say?"

"My dear Miss Carson, what else was there to say? A man like Featherly doesn't gush. Then he asked me to convey to you his profound respects, also something about a white rose, I forget; it's not my rôle, a carrier of billets-doux."

"The shadow of a white rose in a mirror of silver --"

"That was it! He thinks your mirror dance magnificent and asked me who got it up. He's thinking of having a

room in his house done over with mirrors. I told him it would look like a café, but he said not the way he should do it. Have you ever seen his house? It isn't one of those immense places, but it's considered very fine. Well, I'm afraid I'm keeping you and I have an appointment with a man at a quarter before six—" He consulted the managerial watch and left.

The year of "The Harvest of Folly" was dotted with incidents like that. I don't mean messages delivered by Daniells, but here and there a word or a glimpse. I read Simon Featherly's name in the papers and became more familiar with it still; I recognized him more than once in the audience, and once we bowed to each other from the windows of two crossing cabs. We lived in the same world, the pavement that each trod had at some time felt the impress of the other's feet. The brief meeting at Shoreham was extended by these slender means to something which couldn't be called friendship exactly — a kind of "mutual awareness"—the phrase is impossible, but will have to pass. I got to thinking that I knew him much better than I had any reason for knowing him; I afterwards learned that he had had the same sense about me. . . . The climax of all this the future continued to keep — in fact, now, with the familiar name become my own and the year of "The Harvest of Folly" capped by many others, I can't help wondering if the future has given quite all or perhaps still has something to throw at my distracted head. The thought possesses interest — still.

Interest — that's been the note between Simon Featherly and me all along; interest rather than any romance of love. I remember the brother of a London classmate — I've men-

tioned him before — who regarded me with a curiosity which had the possibility of heights. It was so with us. I've mentioned also my own sharp sense of life; Simon's sense of it was even sharper than mine, and we both had the happy faculty of treating emotion coldly. We had all through strong temperamental resemblances — too much alike, perhaps, for marriage. . . . But Mrs. Cassagryer says I go too fast, it's forward of me to have spoken of marriage till it's actually upon me. I tell her we'll pretend I haven't. But one more thing before I leave this high abstract tone and become again consecutive. I have said that my concern with certain things has ever been intermittent in nature — so it has been, and this continued consciousness of Simon's presence or existence isn't paradoxical to that. He made a background to my other concerns, thought of him filled rare moments of leisure. Or sometimes — with the little belled cap jingling about my ears, and the stage back of me a chaos of leaping clowns, I swaying and bending, as Syms had taught me, without an angle or a bone, my mouth wide in a laugh the music blurred — sometimes I would think of Simon Featherly then. And then the male chorus thundering:

"And you shall be a dancer, a dancer in yellow, All in yellow, all in yellow—

I'm going to be a dancer, a dancer in yellow,
O beware! O beware!
I'll take care, I'll take care—
And where are all the dancers, the dancers in yellow?"

XXI. DIVERTISSEMENT

"The Harvest of Folly" was produced in the autumn of 1898. It marks an epoch in contemporary theatrical history. "Aladdin" had set a new standard of magnificence, the "Harvest" merely held its own with that, but it had a distinctiveness which the other lacked, a finish and a polish, care had been taken where care would hardly show; and money barely reckoned. "Bigger — Brighter — Better"—it had done for "Aladdin," but was wholly inadequate to "The Harvest of Folly." "The Harvest of Folly" was best. It had rather a curious history.

One summer — several ones before '98 — Daniells had found himself in Paris with a fortnight of his precious time quite free. The weather was hot and the diversions that Paris offered the usual person of leisure didn't divert him. He discovered unguessed sylvan longings, — the wide blue sky, the shade of a tree, and perhaps a stream where fish leaped to the wary hook. I imagine him purchasing a rod and one of those vile but convenient little tin boxes filled with squirming bait, packing his much-traveled bag, and giving himself over to the uncertainties of the French railway. His destination was vaguely the south, and he got off several stations nearer than his ticket allowed him because he was restless and the view from the train window pleased He was directed to an inn, where he found two deepvoiced Englishwomen who were doing France on bicycles, it was the era of the bicycle,—a lady whom Daniells suspected of being a duchess, but who was known simply as Mme. Caillot, a young man — M. Caillot — an amateur painter, and last of all the great composer, Emile Jacques, a wreck and a shadow of his former glory. He was ill and poor and deserted; he gave music lessons in the village and the landlord let him stay for the luster his name still dimly shed. "That — that man with the white beard seated over there is Emile Jacques, the musician —" And sometimes he sang for his supper — or rather played; the worn piano was the source of divine sounds, passers grouped themselves in the twilight; Daniells remembers a woman with a shawl over her head whose little white dog sat with cocked ears.

"Yes," he said to Daniells, "I play for them, I only mind when Mme. Caillot sings, but I do not mind that so very much — her skirts were cut in Paris."

Daniells and he seemed to have got on famously in a confusion of bad French and worse English. Together they fished, and Daniells took his friend to lunch at a larger inn down the river. I can't make out that they ever caught anything, but they exchanged ideas and gossiped greatly both of dead and living. And then one night Daniells found Jacques playing a strain he'd never heard. "La - comment?" I'm sure the manager expressed himself so, for I've heard his French myself. It was nothing, a scrap from a composition with which Jacques had exercised his declining powers; he had theories about the possibilities of comedy in music which in his prime he'd never been able to put to the test. The comic spirit — it had never been done justice; but he had been known for the serious and one couldn't escape one's destiny. He listened with disgust to the popular music of the time; even the best of it was sugary rather

than gay, and the worst was a thing of horror. The Viennese operettas — what were they — or the loud waltzes that rent the air with carnal shrieks? The tzigany music was more to his taste, and back of that the more primitive folk songs; the Frenchman even admitted the merit of certain early English melodies. But the thing that hadn't been done in music was humor — why should words or acts be the only means of expressing the humor of one's thought? It wasn't wholly a new conception, but it hadn't been done — he insisted. Thus Jacques had essayed to fill the void, but his strength failed him, the score of "La Moissoneuse" was much of it only where he indicated by a tap of the forehead.

"'La Moissoneuse'" - said Daniells, "what is that?"

"The Harvest Woman'—she is Folly, who garners the chaff of the world. As I think the music, so the words come. If I had a young hand to help me, a young brain to think my smaller thoughts that come so stiff—"

Daniells told me that then and there he made up his mind. As far as I can make out he bought Emile Jacques — all right to him and all claim. He couldn't buy "La Moissoneuse" because that lady's separate existence was as yet slight, but he took her creator straight to Paris, set him up in a studio near the Boulevard du Mont Parnasse, provided him with young hands and young brains, and had the felicity of seeing the master's work completed before Emile Jacques breathed his last. It had been a race with death all along.

An English translation was made, scenery was designed and discarded and designed again: Daniells had the great thing up his sleeve for years. One circumstance and another had delayed its production, — the success of "Aladdin," the failure of the "Gnome" and consequent financial need, a series of Shakespearian revivals which took much of Daniells' attention, a growing misunderstanding between him and Syms. Syms had a very present sense of his indispensability, and he took advantage of it to do altogether too much as he pleased. "That d—— little cockney," said Daniells, with more force than grace; "he's as much trouble as a grand opera prima donna who's accepted the lead in a musical comedy!"

With these early trials I had little to do. I had studied the dances during the long tour of "Aladdin," Syms joining me whenever possible. There was an idea — abandoned of producing it in London; but Daniells chose the "Gnome" instead, thinking to risk less. And so it had gone. . . . And now it seemed that poor Emile Jacques had neither lived nor died in vain. As I say, "The Harvest" marked an epoch. I played Folly in a red wig which brought out strongly my resemblance to my father; I wasn't at all the Rose Carson of "Aladdin," but every one agreed that the change was for the better. "It isn't so much your dancin' that's improved," said Syms, "as it is your facial expression. It's as if you knew a lot more — I don't mean up to snuff — not that — it's 'ard to explain just what I do mean. Sort of mysterious you are now, you're thinking and laughin' and the joke's all to yourself."

[&]quot;And before —?"

[&]quot;Oh, before you were like that too, only it wouldn't 'a' got over — any one out in front wouldn't 'a' seen it."

[&]quot;And do they see it now?"

[&]quot;Why, I suppose they do. They'd be fools if they didn't!"

I've often thought since what a very succinct summing up that was. Colonel Rangely, Barney Grant, and Simon—for what did my concern with any of them count but for an ambiguity which the most casual spectator could sense, an added bell in Folly's jingling cap? It's been at once my danger and my salvation.

But I've never bothered much about salvations and dangers — not as much as I should — I've been too busy, in comparison with me and my troubles water and a duck's back have a lasting affinity. This season of "Folly" found me even more occupied than usual, for the people who'd rented the house in Washington Square had at last given it up and I decided to move there myself. I was tired of hotels, the conventional ease of the furniture, the publicity of the corridors, the pasty expectant faces of the waiters, who served me my meals kept warm beneath covers of plated silver. It struck me that the one thing I wanted in all the world was a front door I could call my own and close upon the intruding horde; even if I could only use it at uncertain divided periods I could feel that it was there - behind its locks I might leave my most treasured possemions strewn haphazard.

Mrs. Cassagryer remonstrated with me a little; she has the true British frugality, but I proved to her that my finances warranted the move, and besides, it would probably be cheaper in the end. Think of my hotel bills! She thanked heaven they weren't hers, and my father — who was about to start for England — advised her not to waste her words. "When Rosie only drew a hundred a week you could do something with her, but now when she makes more money in a week than any self-respecting female makes

in a year—not to mention the money she has—why, there's no handling her! I'm her father, I suppose as she's not of age I have some sort of legal claim, I don't know, but what's the use?" Mrs. Cassagryer was becomingly silent and I pointed out that my extravagance was never a patch on his.

"Oh, no, you don't spend money vulgarly - you don't take out a roll of bills, peel off a few yellow ones and shout for help — that's not your style, but it wouldn't occur to any one to offer you anything but the best; if you liked it you'd take it, and if you didn't, you'd go out of the shop —" - But that's my father's exaggerated way. . . . I rose at crack of dawn to see him off and then turned my attention to the preparation of my abode. The tenants had left it in rather a bad state. I had the fun of building without the delays; I was reported as wandering the town with a roll of wall-paper in one hand and a yard of chints in the other; I conferred wisely with painters and plumbers, and developed a wonderful head for measurements. I discovered a young architect with whom I spent delightful mornings in the midst of much scaffolding, and who quite got hold of my idea that the place should be kept simple. "You see," I explained, "it belonged to my grandmother, and I want it to remain hers — a certain severity, a simple dignity."

"I know," said the young man, "so that if her ghost came back, she'd feel at home."

"Exactly!"

But I'm afraid this simple dignity was at first more an ideal than a reality. Downstairs I kept to it, the parlor high and bare with the bareness relieved by a pair of Chippendale sofas done in delicate gray satin, an Aubumon

carpet, a spindling table, curtains of the gray lined with yellow; but in the more intimate parts of the house I couldn't — at that tender age — hold such a standard. From the walls of my bedroom parrots screamed at each other among massed foliage, my rugs caught the exact tone of the parrots' wings, and I had been the fortunate purchaser of a rare set of Chinese lacquer — a bed, dresser, and chairs all black and polished and picked out with occasional scarlet fans. I remember Mrs. Cassagryer's comment: "Well, Rose, one doesn't have to see this room — one hears it!" I've later quieted its more glaring features. I think in those days my decorative sense reflected the memory of a call I had once paid upon Miss Fanner. She had received me within walls to which my simple parrots were nothing, her curtains were of pictured chintz—a recurrent conventionalized garden, a path, a rose bush, a round green tree. There were highly polished floors, a profusion of sofa cushions, and a large heavily mustached face that smiled down upon it all from a heart-shaped frame on the mantel. The thing was scrawled with a quoted, "Always." Always what? — And what of heart was left — though the mustached gentleman looked as if there might have been a good deal. It was in emulation of the light he shed that my father's likeness gazed at me from the lacquered dresser; "Rosie from her Dad," filling the "Always" space.

My austerity of intent manifested itself again in the quarters I arranged for Mrs. Cassagryer. Bookshelves and upholstered leather and empty corners where, as I told her, the thoughts could gather — then the bedroom opening out, pure Jacobean, small but faultless, and I indulged myself in some good lace for the windows and bed. "A widow's

room" — my friend called it, and swore my theatrical instinct never failed me. But she liked it, nevertheless; she liked the whole thing, the bedroom, the study, and the little tiled bathroom where she says she feels neither young enough nor pretty. . . . Each to their setting. Hers can't be all bookcases.

As I write she's launched upon the ninth—or is it the tenth? — of her immortal works. It gives me a delightful sense of my own part in them, the fact of having arranged her scene; I am sure that with a different outlook there are details which would have come different. If she hadn't had the big chair to sit on, the leather one with the carved back and the heavy brass-headed nails, how could she have quite plumbed the depths of the poor young king's despair — dethroned, exiled? The throne, the seat of power, she makes one realize what it might mean. And again, more generally, I can't help feeling that a certain directness in her work, a certain solidity of workmanship, is in part upheld by the broad oak of her writing table, in part reflected from the big square windows through which her thinking eyes gaze out. In ten years she's steadily grown in force and the end is not yet; I envy her her complete immunity from the prohibitions of middle age — they won't matter to her, it's her wonderful mind. . . .

I remember so well when the lubrications of that mind first became a marketable commodity. I mean when her book was published, the one she had finished at Colchester. After various preliminary skirmishes it had been accepted by a New York publishing house of considerable enterprise and a reputed faith in what they called "new blood"; though Mrs. Cassagryer insisted her blood wasn't as new as all

that. She hadn't talked to me about her book at all, she wanted me to come to it quite fresh; I didn't know even its name, and I'd been very honorable and hadn't peeped at proof sheets. My ignorance was carried to the extent even of not being told the date of its publication. I found the thing in my morning's mail. I had a premonition when I picked up the package; I called out to her in the next room, but my voice fell, "Oh, I thought—I thought—But 'Warp and Woof' by Calumet Tarr. Who is Calumet Tarr and why should he send me his book?"

"I am," said Mrs. Cassagryer.

I sat up straight in bed and my breakfast tray upset; we had to attend to that a little before we got back to the main subject. "You!" I held "Warp and Woof" close. "You know I don't think I ever realized before that you wrote. It's real — it's flesh and blood —"

My friend stood there smiling her drawn little smile. "I hope you'll apply those terms to the threads that make it up!"

"You mean the characters?"

That's the remarkable part to me, how she can invent characters. It's uncanny; I should think it might strike some people as sacrilegious, a trespass upon consecrated ground. Now in this book of mine I merely take the people I've known myself and try to copy them down. She does that too; but under her hand she says they change, come to have entities of their own, and frequently conduct themselves in a manner quite opposed to her desires. She brings them forth, evocations from the unknown, and in doing that she seems to set free what is at times beyond her control. I don't understand; in some early pages I've attempted to

explain her mental processes, but I've only transcribed what she herself has told me. I yet don't understand. It must be very exciting. Calumet Tarr—she doesn't wish Cassagryer's reputation to be confounded, hence the pseudonym—must know joys we less privileged mortals are denied. Her ambiguities, her mysteries, come from an inner rather than an outer source; there are times when I feel her living in a world quite apart. She talks, she replies to my remarks, she goes on with the business of life; but I feel her real concern is not for that. There are times when she is possessed by her thought—utterly swayed; I've seen her so absorbed that it's as if she were watching the whole human comedy through a knot hole in a board.

She watches it — that's it — she studies it, she's one of those chosen by the gods to interpret it to itself. I'm not pretending to rival her, I'm not comparing this book of mine to "Warp and Woof" or any other of her works — but isn't there something here which "Warp and Woof" of necessity misses, faults as well as virtues; isn't there an occasional powder mark, a page torn across in the speed of the fight? It's all of what I know myself — people and things; but there is much I know by inheritance and instinct, much that is familiar to me through my own intensity of living, which Mrs. Cassagryer only reaches through a conscious observation. And again, she may have had experiences of life I've gone without, the pains of illness, poverty, something for which the Christian Scientists say, "Life is Spirit" - I haven't found it that. I recognize in myself the limitation. . . .

XXII. THE LITTLE ROSE

THAT winter I played "The Harvest of Folly" for twentysix consecutive weeks, did over the house in Washington Square, watched the launching of my friend's book, and had a letter from Valentine Seymour announcing her marriage. These are the year's events in the order of their instant importance. For as Valentine's address was a postmark half obliterated — Colorado, I made out that — and she neglected to tell me who was the partner of her bliss, the event of her marriage hardly struck home to me in the midst of my occupations. I think there was an earlier communication gone astray. She said she was married "at last" as if I had been already informed of her waiting — and then dismissed the matter briefly yet intimately: "Oh, so happy, my dear — I didn't know — everything I've ever done is nothing." And again: "We read of your triumph, we long to see for ourselves, we saw your photograph in a Denver paper, but would hardly have known you — you were in a queer spotted costume and were standing on the shoulders of two clowns, straddled from one to the other how do you keep your balance?" I noted her use of "we." I intended sending to Mrs. Seymour in Montreal for other information. But intentions are weak, measured against closer things.

It was an afternoon in early spring — London was imminent, so it must have been spring — when I came out

from the theater and met Simon Featherly face to face.

The passageway which led to the stage door was dim, and emerging suddenly into the brightness, I didn't see at once who it was who had stopped short in his course and stood waiting. He stood there smiling a little; I remember the smile—it displayed most excellent teeth—and I remember the effect he gave of an absolute stillness. It was as if the raised hat, the extended hand, the cane lightly caught between arm and side, were fixed in a sculptor's casting. For a moment I stared, speech wouldn't come; and then I too smiled, and put out my hand. "Mr. Featherly!"

That seemed to release the springs of action, and Featherly replaced his hat on his head. "What are you doing here at this hour?"

I had been to a rehearsal, and I explained how rehearsals were called at intervals during the run of a piece in order to keep everything up to the mark, and also, in this case, to drill some new people. I went into the matter rather deeply; it gave me a chance to get my wits. Featherly waited politely. "And what are you doing now?"

I struggled with the realization that the future I had considered so much had arrived. "Now—?" I said, partly for what was upon me, partly in mechanical repetition of the question put to me.

Featherly fingered his cane. "Yes — now — what are you doing?" He still waited; Katie loomed, my cab door swung wide.

"Why, I'm going home to change my things, lie down, have something to eat; then I'm coming back here."

"Oh, don't do all that, come and have a cup of tea with me! What a terrible young lady you are, having your plans so exact — so clear —"

I still struggled with my realization, and in the midst of that I must have given my consent to the tea, for I found myself on the way towards Fifth Avenue. I was told Delmonico's would be at the moment quieter than Sherry's, and for that my escort would sacrifice his opportunity to shine in reflected glory, I must be so eternally tired of having people stare. . . .

We left Katie to mount guard in the cab, from which she fixed us watchfully till the angle of the corridor blocked her view.

"She doesn't like me; she warns me that if I so much as harm a hair of your precious little head — as if I should be vandal enough —" We sat down amid laughter.

The room was practically empty and seemed to echo both our laughter and our speech, making them more important than a single hearing might warrant. Our reunion was in every way accented, much as might be the big scene In the glare of the spring afternoon Simon in a play. Featherly's entrance had been quite artificially defined, and now the space we had to ourselves served the same end. In the distance waiters made preparations for the dinner hour; they were swift and silent and carried deftly impossible burdens of linen and silver; at one table they were arranging garlands of smilax, flowers too, I had a whiff of flower-scent. This also was all for us. We held the center of the stage, and yet the use we made of it seemed wholly inadequate. I've had this sense of inadequacy in almost all of the really big situations that I've ever been in.

We consumed tea and toast, we talked — our speech, as I say, had a superficial importance — but what we said mattered comparatively little. Featherly addressed me lightly, untruthfully: "All winter I've been writing you notes and tearing them up, making plans to see you and then deciding I wouldn't indulge myself in bothering you."

I answered him as lightly: "And all winter I've been hoping you would." I smiled back at him.

He was unprepared for the boldness of the smile — I was unprepared for it myself; he showed his surprise in a faint flicker, a narrowing and darkening of eye-pupil. "I've so often heard of you from Mr. Daniells," he said.

"Ah, yes, I think he said he knew you — at the Players' Club —"

"Yes. I told him that I had the pleasure of knowing you a little in your less public capacity."

"The time you came — I remember —"

I shouldn't have gone on, but he put it baldly. "The time you were engaged to be married to my nephew."

This seemed nearer the eternal verities than anything we yet had said; I breathed freer. "You know that's all over now."

"Yes, I know."

We stopped there for a while, and at last I put a question largely for the necessity of going on. "How is Barney?" I asked.

I could see I was thought sudden. "Barney? He's very well. He meditates upon the mystery of woman; it's one, he says, he will never solve."

"Ah — he wouldn't — not in a thousand years!"

"You mean —?"

"You know --"

"You mean he's young and free from guile—? Well, what else would you have him be?"

I went off at a tangent. "Don't think I mean that he's a fool," I said.

His uncle became very full and clear: "No, he's not a fool. In fact, he has a considerable force. But as yet it's rather the force of youth. He's all latent, all potential, if you understand that. I've seen him rise. . . ." Featherly paused, then went on: "I believe in him very much indeed — I don't speak because he's my kith and kin, I've had him in my office, and every opportunity to observe him — yes, I believe in him. But then, my dear young lady, I'm old and wise and patient. He's big, but his bigness hasn't developed, and you're in too much of a hurry to wait! I think I know. . . ."

I stiffened with the stress of my excitement. "I think you do."

And then it came to me how curious it was, our talking thus intimately together of one with whom we both of us had had so much closer a relation than we ever had had to each other. Yet didn't this in itself constitute a sort of bond—give us a license? When you looked at it like that, Barney Grant was the only bond we had. He was Simon Featherly's beloved nephew, had been trotted on the avuncular knee, been watched from child to man by the queer, clever eyes; he was—or had been—my promised lover, and if I hadn't dandled him, I had held him close. But that had been the least of it—the actual contacts—I had loved him, and as I sat there having tea with his uncle I was reminded of my love. It came back sharp to me, and I was

suddenly jealous for it in the presence of the man who had caused its passing. The man himself was little more than a stranger; our talk bridged a gulf I didn't care to bridge; after months of waiting I now had an instinct of flight. He was a stranger, but the months of waiting hadn't dimmed the familiar ring both of his presence and his name. I felt I knew him altogether too well.

I think I can separate from my ensuing years of knowledge exactly how it was he struck me then. A man very vital, with a vitality worn a little smooth — hard — tempered flashing steel; and yet through his hardness still preserving the acute intensity of his sensibilities, which in his scheme of things mustn't — couldn't — be let slip. He was conscious like that, self-made in the deeper sense of being to a degree his own creator; one felt him a force that generated its own power, one could almost hear the hum of the engines. Impulse he quite lacked, or the usual human frailties; because he had made himself he was a man without faults but I encroach upon a later knowledge. He wasn't swayed and buffeted by storms, his storms rose from within; one had a glimpse sometimes back of the queer eyes — it was like looking at swordplay through a flecked veil. But perhaps I can't judge, perhaps I attribute to him powers and qualities he didn't possess; I think from the first he put his power over me and so made me see in him what he wished that I might see.

All this of the inner rather than the outer man. . . . He was tall, though being myself accustomed to greater heights I didn't find him so, and thick-set — as I've said — without any clumsiness of fat. In the waist rather slim, broad in the shoulders, powerful of arm and hand; very perfectly set

together, my professional eye told me, and yet — with it all — not giving the effect of beauty. He somehow succeeded in having personality, presence, power, without having charm. Some one once explained that by saying he wasn't a Christian; but my father wasn't a Christian, and he had charm; my mother surely wasn't, and she had it; Valentine Seymour wasn't — nor Valentine's Penny Black — the most charming people I know, all of them — the list is endless. People have always explained Simon Featherly. He lent himself to happy phrases — I fall into the net myself — and find myself making use of the past tense, illogically, for whatever may have been once true of him I'm sure still holds, he would hardly change now. I suppose people are still explaining him. But then, that day when I met him outside the theater, I knew little of him from outside sources, I hadn't heard the mass of comment and rumor which forms itself like a trailing glory about any one who differs on the side of bigness from the general type. I came at him fairly fresh, I took him — as I hope I always take my fellows — for what he seemed to me. I took him — I think we took each other — quite stripped of the trappings of the great.

And I must have made it plain just how conspicuous, how hard to put aside, those trappings were; I must have given something of our outward glory. Each in our province we were well known, even celebrated, and we both bore the insignia of our rank. Not only the subtler marks of conquest were ours, the little unmistakable distinctions and assurances, but dressing and brushing—the sweep of my gown, the cut of his coat—both Americans, we were living refutations of the happy fallacy that Americans are crude.

And our scene, our setting, the dignified pomp of Delmonico's (almost too somber for tea), the quiet hour, the famous thoroughfare our windows faced — that, too, was part of our high state. And yet the essential situation between us remained peculiarly simple — the essential interest we had in each other which pressed forward through the silences.

There had been a long one after our talk of Barney, but at the last Simon Featherly broke it: "And having given him up, then what? The next step of your progress, what is that?" He looked at me very square. "What—?" he repeated.

I assured him I hadn't the slightest idea.

"You have my envy." And then — "How splendid. . . . You're gloriously free, young and fine. It's magnificent," he said. And again — "You, at your age, you've scaled the height."

We changed to lighter mood and I asked him, jesting, whether for the rest of my days I would be doomed to a perch upon that honorable eminence. We became very gay indeed, and decided it would be a sort of heaven without the harps.

"I could have, instead, a pair of castanets!"

"I'm sure you could have anything you liked --"

And then I awoke to the growing lateness and was finally restored to Katie and the cab, driving home in a state of supreme tension about excitements I couldn't have begun to formulate.

Leave-taking had surely been sufficiently commonplace. Not a handclasp—a bow without that, a look, a mutual assurance of pleasure enjoyed—no word, even, of pleasure to be enjoyed again. As my vehicle turned the corner I

had checked an impulse to look back out of the window and so discover whether Simon Featherly went up or down east or west. He may have gone back into Delmonico's or remained where he stood on the curb. I should like to have known. The city held him and I should like to have known how. In my mind I followed him, turned and followed him again, pictured his house in Madison Avenue, speculated — in a vain sort of way that yet seemed oddly enlightening — about the circumstances of his dining. Would he be solitary among his treasures — would he sit there at his board beneath the grim distinguished gaze of some Duke of Ferrara? Would the painted lips hail and claim him from across the centuries, and with their call sounding in his ears would he take his postprandial cigar upstairs to the little oval gallery where Caravaggio and Salvator Rosa contested for sway? Or would he be spoken by lips done in softer pigments? Very lovely, these must surely be, and he rather aloof in the midst of revelry. He might dine quietly with a fellow financier and the cloth be strewn with the scribbled papers which breed in brokers' pockets. . . . My wandering thoughts taught me how little of the man I really knew. But, as I say, I should like to have known — it was the fatal interest of the thing, begun then.

I remember my preoccupation made me late in getting to the theater, and, once there, I danced abominably. That was at first. As the evening wore, my preoccupation smoothed, I sank to the wonder of Jacques' music, the tension — the fatigue I had begun to feel — dropped away. I felt myself curiously light and fine — lost among the mirrored images I danced with, hardly more palpable than they. And then, at the end of that, came the great Dance of the Clowns,

instead of mirrors, a street festooned and flagged, the tempo swifter, the key sharper. . . .

"And you shall be a dancer—"

Clowns formed a sort of bridge for me across the stage, and I picked my precarious way from one to another of the stalwart shoulders, strutting a little as befitted Folly triumphant, arms akimbo, finger and thumb lightly clasping clownish pantaloons, cap at a breaking angle. I must have been a bizarre figure enough. I stood high, the path I had trod a curving tail behind me, a monster that swayed in a wild march and fell quite apart as I jumped to the ground. Then my dance. . . .

"I'm going to be a dancer —"

I turned and spoke low to a clown back of me, "Bless you, I am a dancer!" And then—"Laugh, every one laugh—" My own rang high, leading the deeper rumble; I threw back my head for it till my slight body curved, and stretched forth supplicating arms, hands with fingers tense. The curtain cut me off. It rose again to an applause which my trained ear knew for applause I never had heard before; it had a note in it almost of hysteria, a tremor audible like a straying footfall; it clamored at me; a little more and I might have had the tribute of tears.

Yet that perhaps demands the spoken word, and mine is the art of pantomime; Rose Carson — as Rose Carson — is inarticulate. I wonder at having even a private faculty of speech, what faculties I have are so absorbed into my calling, my whole being is so governed by a Darwinian process of selection — a sort of survival of the fittest by which in time whatever of my make-up doesn't directly contribute to my aim ceases to be. I should like to be something more than a sounding board reflecting and giving forth chance excitements, the intensities engendered by chance meetings. The new note I had heard, the new stir, wasn't a tribute to me, but to Simon Featherly. Simon Featherly—a rendition by Folly. He should have been there with me, taking the recalls, smiling and shaking his head in blank refusal to go through with it again. I had a little the illusion that he was. The merely physical barriers of space I felt were powerless before the lightness and fineness of my fatigue. I was free, as he had said—free as if the spirit in me had broken away from its enchaining flesh, still bright from the color of its prison. . . .

I was altogether too free to go home to Mrs. Cassagryer and a well-advised repast and bed, yet this course offered no alternative. I—who had danced on the shoulders of clowns, whirling, abandoned, before the public gaze—discovered myself too protected, too tenderly guarded. Katie, buttoning me and pinning me and giving me the final pat with her indicative of completion, struck me as a fussing old woman. The ever present cab which was waiting for us at the stage door bored me infinitely. I could have wished myself for once reduced to the ranks—other vehicles besides cabs waited for them—expectant faces peered from the shadows, a greeting was exchanged, a couple whisked off arm in arm into the night. I remember Katie's inquiring gaze illuminated by the violet rays of an arc lamp; she wanted to know what was the matter with me.

"Nothing," I said, "only I don't want to go home!" It might seem that was a good deal, but she took it concretely:

"Where do ye want to go?"

"Ah — that's it!" I said. I turned my back on her incomprehension.

Adventure loomed, and what I've brought up before, possibility. The city night was full of it, all astir as forest bracken is astir — my own blood, too. Suddenly, sharply, like a vivid moment with a ghost, I remembered my inheritance; for a moment my mother seemed to come back to me — not from without, as she still sometimes did, but from within, very intimately. I saw with her eyes, heard with her ears, kindled with her restlessness. And yet I imagine that she never had been given to roving vaguely into the void, which was exactly what I had the moment's impulse to do, and also I imagine her adventures — such as they were — had nothing either of the void or of vagueness about them. While I — my desire was to explore, to wander, to penetrate depths, to go from mystery into mystery. My desires my emotions — were in a measure abstract. I had then — I've always had — the wish to get at things, stir them up, find out, and then go off like a dog with his bone and crunch or bury again, as I chose.

Broadway was very bright and gay, a great avenue of light and sound, filled with glitter and clatter. There it was again — the public glare, the public voice — it was abandoned, like me, to the big public gaze, pleasure commercialized, worked out by rule of three. One found there what one brought — no more — and that night I had brought all I had. I thrilled — was dazzled by the light — and in the sound distinguished at last every separate tone, the tread of feet in thousands, the sharper beat of hoofs, swift wheels, the occasional prophetic screech of an automobile. Sounds not heard were surmised; I remember music that must have

found its way through wide doors—there were red stairs mounting up and the players gesticulating on the landing. I think I could have danced to that—why not?—music, too, in pantomime, and the red carpet back of me. It was all so gay, a merging of perceptions, light and sound together. . . . And then the contrasting silence and dimness of long side streets—doors that concealed instead of displayed and the first steps of a staircase lost in shadow. People hurried like rabbits, a cat shot out of an area way, two policemen strode along swinging their night sticks; and at Sixth Avenue, which we crossed on our way east, an elevated train thundered above us.

We attained dignity, even magnificence, as the numbers dwindled, an atmosphere of solvency both social and financial — seven — five — three — on the glass of the outer doors, one — and we turned down the avenue. was tempered now, the silences hardly significant; there was a smooth gliding of carriages, orderly like a squadron in line, and men walked rapidly with coats open to immaculate shirt fronts. Even so, the thought came to me, might Simon Featherly be returning. . . . That night my interest in him made for my interest in his brothers — one had a little of the firmness of his tread, another's cane reminded me of his, and yet another, talking, struck a note I had remembered in his For me he was everywhere, every man was like him; I think I knew then how things would be. Marriage — no less. My certainty took no account of the many considerations which would stand in the way with a man such as he. I put myself among his treasures, I would be the jewel in the crown, the little Rose, as Barney Grant had said. To my young lover it had been a fantastic jest; to me, now, it was curiously plausible. There at the door of my house on Washington Square, with the mysteries of other doors well behind me, I had an astonishing moment of clairvoyance. I, the crowning gem, he — but he would have his eternal interest.

XXIII. ART AND LIFE

I can't say how long it was after that before I saw him again — a matter of days, not weeks, for "The Harvest of Folly" opened at the Royalton Theater early in May, and before I sailed he and I had come to a fairly definite understanding. Events happened quickly; we didn't either of us have much time for beating about the bush; there was little of the pretty philandering which had so decorated my other courting — no moonshine — no winds blowing in Instead of that, brief greetings over the telefrom the sea. phone, the shaded light of my parlor in the late afternoons, and a pervading sense of the protecting care of Mrs. Cassagryer. I remember her adding her graceful dignity to an already dignified supper party at the house in Madison Avenue — the table massed with orchids and her little head and shoulders rising droll from the end farthest from me. . . .

It was an entertainment given partly to impress me with the fashion and desirability of the other guests, and partly, I think, to impress them with similar attributes in me. We were all on exhibition, much as were the pictures and the house itself; we showed each other off — from Mrs. Cassagryer, perfect refutation of the fallacy that dancers go unguarded, to the big gold-monogramed plates, a fitting frame for the perfections of the Featherly chef. I remember the pretty Wallingford girls — known in society columns as the Wallingford twins — perfectly contrasted in scarlet and white, and turning phrases much too apt to have been

original with them — I suspected them of using the same ones at different times in different parts of the room. Nothing was unpremeditated. I remember my host leading me over to the famous French tapestry that hung across the south wall of his library; he kept me there, "showing me up" as a jeweler shows a stone against black velvet; I saw how his eyes took in even the folds the hem of my skirt lay in on the floor, the slipper tip that shone, the way my hair was dressed. Then he turned to some women who were grouped at the other end of the room and I saw him appraising them and saw my own easy success.

His admiration always had this impersonal tone. thought he married me on impulse, that his passion got the better of his reason; but it seems to me that he made his choice with his reason all there; whatever of passion there was, or love, came after. He made his decision because it was his custom so to do, not — as his friends thought — because he'd lost his head. Simon Featherly losing his head. . . . I remember him the morning I sailed, occupied rather less with me than he was with the various people — assistant managers, press agents, two or three reporters — who had gathered for my departure. "Rose, it seems you're a very famous person." Then the whistle blew for shore and he left abruptly. I remember what was the nearest that he ever came — in those days — to telling me he loved me: "Rose, life has held everything else long ago, and now, my dear, it holds the most precious thing of all—" kissed me then, and he wasn't given to endearments.

But again I've forged ahead of my story. As I said, I can't tell how long it was before I saw Simon Featherly a second time. I remember only that I had been driving in

the park in the midst of a fine spring shower — the which I always seek — and I came home to find him warming his hands in front of my parlor blaze and talking cozily to Mrs. Cassagryer.

"I've taken the liberty — the very great one — of coming. I shouldn't have been admitted, but this lady and I met upon the doorstep. She let me in — don't make her regret it."

"I'll try not to," I said.

The meeting which Featherly described was the first between those two, and he enjoys the distinction of being the only man about whom Mrs. Cassagryer and I have never been mutually frank — she's never told me at all what she thinks of him, and I have been equally reticent with her. With him her responsibility ended — she turned me over. He had said she had let him in, it seemed more as though he had done that to her — brought her to the fire and sheltered her from the storm. It was he who commanded the situation, and she was concealing her excited surrender beneath an imperturbable English smile. She would protect me still; the next month was filled full of her protection, but at heart she knew.... knowledge in the angle of her retreating back as she went off to meditate upon her passing hour.

I felt other things besides that. I was lifted quite beyond the necessity of words. It wasn't now through anything my visitor said that I realized how far our intimacy had progressed since the tea at Delmonico's. My certainty of that night, the moment when it had come to me how things would be, might have come to him also; at least he'd begun to consider it, and the thought in his mind put us on a different footing altogether. Delmonico's — our hour there

— was irretrievable. Left alone with him I saw that — I had still my instinct for flight and saw suddenly that flight was far behind me. And it wasn't by what he said, and surely not by what he did; he was scrupulously polite. At least he managed to seem so, in spite of his offering so little excuse for having come uninvited, in spite of never suggesting that I might have other occupations than entertaining him. He didn't talk much at all; he sat, then stood, then walked about, went to the window and looked out with a brief comment upon the rain and the charm of the old-fashioned neighborhood, and finally he turned and concentrated all his gaze on me myself.

I think from the first his intentions were what is called honorable. He wasn't that sort of man; he had at least perception enough to set me apart from the other sort of woman — I was as he had said, young and fine. . . .

He turned and offered me his gaze and I felt caught in it as a bird might be in a trap. To prove that I wasn't, I too rose and moved about; I put a stick on the fire, set the books on the table straight, gathered up the fallen petals of some flowers, and all the time Featherly followed me with his eyes; it was as if he thought I might escape. There was little chance of that. Finally his contemplations flowered—"Nothing in nature," he said.

It seemed it was this rather ominous representation of which I most reminded him. I protested.

[&]quot;What —?"

[&]quot;And very few in art."

I stopped short. "But I don't understand —"

[&]quot;I've seen a figure," he went on, "painted on the wall of a king's tomb—"

"Oh, well — have it, as you like — primitive Greek — certain bronzes in the Louvre. . . . But you have life besides — ever changing." He put out his hands to me. "My dear child, I don't believe you begin to know how extraordinary you are!" He came over to where I was standing by the table and I thought he would have taken me in his arms; but instead he said good-by. In the door he once more blazed at me and then was gone.

Over my toast and broth I looked through some mail that had come and afterwards had my usual rest before going to the theater.

I was saved all along by these quite commonplace pursuits from a too great preoccupation with weightier ones. day brought fresh labors — new clothes for Folly, for which London orders had to be placed in advance, studies, rehearsals, a serious disagreement between Syms and Daniells — a project of Daniells for taking Folly to Paris with a French company much discussed. Though this last was really little more than clever advertising; there were a number of legal complications which wouldn't have been worth surmounting, but the public didn't know them and the newspapers were voluminous. Daniells was sending three "Folly" companies on the road and the savor of Paris did no harm. The origin of "La Moissoneuse" was given wide publicity; a photograph of the inn where Emile Jacques had been discovered appeared in the Sunday prints, together with a history of his life most luminously incorrect. I found myself one morning in the Star, very broad-minded and generous, and praising French dancers quite indiscriminately, but not being at all sure who would be the one best fitted for Folly. I thanked my press agent for one quotable phrase: "Dancing," he reports me, "has in this country a place below the salt, the light o' love among the arts, the outcast sister of music and drama, she exists on the sufferance of her more respected kin; while in France—" I forget just what the difference was in France, but I doubtless had an apt one. . . .

From the first my admirer showed no desire to compete with these professional interests; he treated them then as he has always, with a sincere respect; in fact, I think my public character enhanced my value, success appealed to him hugely, my having made it, and the way I was placed outside the fireside sphere of womankind. Domesticity bored him, also the agressively masculine type; I was fortunately placed for his admiration without a trace of either. He formed the habit of coming in on his way up town, and I think if it hadn't been that he decided to marry me we might have laid the foundation of a life friendship. He had the collector's restlessness to possess whatever struck him as remarkable. Besides my resemblance to the painted figure on the wall of a king's tomb, he found in me qualities of mind. He told me that though there was nothing he admired in me more than he did my youth, there were times when these qualities made him quite forget it. We talked about art — he had a free way of tracing its progress from the very earliest times, down through the ages, - Thebes, Athens, the Italian Renaissance. . . . Art flowed — Styx-like — a mighty river around the world.

And through it all, growing and spreading, was Featherly's purpose to have me, at last as clear as though it were stood before us in letters ten feet high. He turned it in his thoughts, his imagination played; he was the only person I'd ever known whose imagination equaled my own. He came day after

day, his eyes ever on me, sometimes flaming, sometimes cold, sometimes altogether distant and abstract, as hard as the carved sardonyx in the eye of the Horus-god he kept watch at his desk. He weighed the pitfalls of his possession of me in the balance with the pitfalls of his need; he struck aside pitfalls altogether and measured my value — very high, he found it. One day he came charged with his decision as a mine with powder.

Spring filled the air like a visible presence. I remember it so because my wooer seemed to be of particularly unspring-like cast. I remember the hat I had been wearing, large and black with great white flowers. I took it off, standing before the high old mirror, and looking at Simon Featherly's reflection, as well as at my own — half turned away he was and evidently waiting — I put it down on the table that held the books, where it lay, a detached and silent witness of all the next hour held. I thrust the long pins deep into the crown. "Well —?"

"Well," I was answered. "And what are you going to do now?" It seemed the question ever on his tongue.

"I'm going to sit down, and then if you like I'll ring and we can have some tea."

"Splendid!"

"Ah — I'm glad."

His next question was more concrete. "Why did you break your engagement to my nephew?"

"I thought you knew —"

"Because he wasn't big enough—? Yes. But what made you find that out?"

"What made me —? I don't know, I'm sure."

The truth was compelled.

"You," I said weakly.

"I — ?"

"You made me find it out."

There came a gleam. "I thought so."

I find it difficult to convey the blankness of the pause which followed that. But at last Simon Featherly went on: "Don't for a moment think I delude myself into imagining you're in love with me!"

"No," I said, "I'm not in love with you. I suppose you wonder why I threw over for you a man I was in love with."

"My dear child — love — it isn't what I came here to talk about."

He took a turn about the room and then stood himself squarely before me. "You wouldn't marry Barney — I thought perhaps you'd marry me." He spoke with a full knowledge of what his words might cost him.

It was the thing too, strangely, which impressed me. I had never felt either so honored or so humble. I had been prepared, but not prepared enough; I had to realize over again from the beginning what was upon me, and my realization had this strange result of making me feel myself unworthy of the sacrifice Simon Featherly was ready for. My instant's impulse was to save him: "I'm not nearly as extraordinary as you think me."

"Eh —?"

"I say I'm not nearly as extraordinary as you think. I'm not as beautiful or as clever — at least there are other people just as much so. You've worked yourself up about me — you think I'm the figure on an Egyptian tomb (yours, or whose, I'm sure I don't know) — you confuse me with the image you've set up — you have an ideal. It's merely

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because I'm an actress and can make myself what you want me to be. . . . When you marry me you'll find out!"

He smiled without in any way suggesting mirth. "What shall I find?"

"What I say — that I'm not what I seem to you now — you've set me on a pedestal —"

I was stopped short. "Good God — if a man intends to marry a woman, wouldn't he have to set her on a pedestal —?"

"Ah — I know it's not easy!"

"Then don't make it less so. And you don't believe a word you're saying — and yet you're clever. Out of the mouths of babes — I grant you everything. But why, Rose, why? I wasn't born yesterday; I'm not in the habit of being cheated — cheated or mistaken. And as for what I shall find . . . Youth — the little slant-eyed figure on a tomb — life itself. Oh, my dear, with a clear conscience you can leave that to me! You — I shall set you high, I warn you — you, your light feet treading dim corridors, flecking away the dust, leading me back, leading me on — your strong young hands —"

Simon Featherly had them in both his own; he held me firmly yet lightly, as one whose habit it was to have contact with precious objects; he drew me close and saluted me chastely on the brow. Then looked as though for a scar his kiss might have left.

"Ah — the pretty dark hair," he said, "and the white skin —"

XXIV. THE GAMBLER

I was exactly twenty when I married Simon Featherly. He waited for me a year and a half, and showed in that some of the most notable qualities of his strength. He must have known the chance he ran of losing me altogether; he must have known that he could, if he'd willed, have married me out of hand; and yet he waited, sphinx-like, while I considered him from every possible angle, or at times didn't consider him — while I went on with the even course of life, filled with the joys and labors of my calling, putting it first and myself first, placing between us for its exigencies whole seas and continents. He waited, apparently immolating himself on the altar of my whim that he should wait, and yet in a way not immolating himself at all, but being very present to me — even with seas and continents between. It sometimes seemed as if his patience were merely an arrant confidence of power. . . . He could hardly have been called an ardent lover; yet he took pains at which even the most ardent might have boggled, long journeys for a day's sight of me — I believe it was literally that — and thought weeks ahead so that flowers greeted my arrival in the sombre rooms of strange hotels. For I didn't let things go any more easily on account of my coming marriage; it was clearly agreed that marriage would make no difference, and at any rate I remember my contract with Daniells had a year still to run. After that Featherly had great plans — Syms, myself, a company of dancers, Europe. . . .

These plans were the subject of much correspondence and, when we were together, much talk. It was thought that Daniells had for me outlived his usefulness, and his having in the beginning given me my opportunity wouldn't weigh. My new adviser replied to my scruples by pointing out that were our positions reversed — Daniells' and mine — and I were the one become unnecessary, the manager wouldn't think twice about setting me adrift — "Not twice — and besides, Rose, it's the wrong atmosphere. You're wedged in between the buffooneries of Pingly and the shrill top notes of Vera Spring, you need a freer scope." It would evidently be his pleasure to see that I had it; in that differing from the more commonplace husband. My life wouldn't be upset, merely made fuller and richer; as Rose Featherly I could aspire to heights. Featherly made it very clear how little to his own advantage any real upheaval would be; he had no desire to disturb himself; at forty his paths were already marked.

Sometimes it seemed to me that my marriage would mean little more than my present state of being promised for it. After London and a brief rest Daniells had sent me on tour with "Folly" — thirty weeks in half as many cities — and when I was married there wouldn't be Daniells, but I should be dashing about in much the same way, Simon — I had to practice the "Simon" — attending to his affairs in New York and meeting me here and there whenever he could contrive it. I should feel then, as now, his guiding hand; with Mrs. Cassagryer and my father he would complete a splendid triumvirate of custodians. I felt, as I say, it would be like that — the personal equation, the man himself, I hardly reckoned with at all. I have somewhere said that he

made me see in him what he wished that I might see; he also hid from me what he wished that I mightn't, and it now suited him to make his presence most felt as an abstract beneficent power. A full apprehension of his concrete image was confined to rare moments of gazing. He would come before me then — either in flesh or spirit — and every line and feature, from the planted feet to the close-shaved sleekness, the delicate hardness which informed the whole, every inch and angle, would stand out to me as part of something to which I was inextricably bound.

Why I was bound I didn't know. The question occasionally worried my leisure, but bore no fruit of answer. Why should I have freed myself one year to put myself in fetters the next? Youth and the fullness of life still had their claim—a claim to be fulfilled by Simon Featherly? I would bring those things to him, perhaps, but he would hardly do the same for me. . . . Yet through all this the fact remained inexorable—I was going to marry him. It had a quality of the rising and setting sun or the stars in their courses. I realized it or not, as the mood was on me; I took it abstract or concrete; but I never doubted. I remember the sort of doubt expressed by my father, one day in London.

He had received a letter, held back by my request till I could be there myself to help him understand and bear it. Yes, I told him it was true, what the letter said, Mr. Featherly had done me the very great honor of asking me to be his wife. "Are you sure, Rosie, sure—?"

"Yes, father, quite sure."

And then my father was struck all at once: "But, Rosie, you can't — it's not possible — you mustn't! He's older — he's — why, he's not your sort!"

"Not my sort—?" I remember saying, and then, my father:—

"It won't do, you know, it won't do." He waxed explosive and abusive and at last altogether incoherent, then back to a high pathos: "My God, Rosie, you're the only thing I've got left! If I lose you, I've nothing in the world to care about. This man — this Featherly — he'd take you away from me — take a child away from her own father!"

He had a house near the Regent's Park, not very far away from our old lodgings, and he paced the length of the rather spacious parlor with which it was provided. "I got this for you, Rosie," he said; "I thought when you were here you'd like a place you could call your own — I got everything for you, you know I have, you know I do; but if you marry, why, I wouldn't give one of these damned English five-pound-notes for any of it. You'll get away from me —"

I told him he had felt a little like that about my going on the stage.

"But you've made a success of it."

"You mean I shouldn't make a success of marrying?"

"I don't know — it's in the blood. . . ." He thought for a space. "This man — he's Barney Grant's uncle, isn't he, the one who came down to look you over last summer at Shoreham? Well, he's done his looking to good purpose. When I said he wasn't your sort, don't you see what I meant? He's a swell — he knows people, the people who have their names in the paper —"

"But we have our names in the paper!"

"Lord, yes, I should think we did! But not that way. Simon Featherly — you read of him as spending week-ends at Tuxedo, places like that. 'Ye shall inherit the earth' — that was said of the Jews, wasn't it?—and he's not a Jew, I believe, in spite of the Simon,—but he has a right, I don't know whether his right's in the earth or in what. . . . He'll make a great lady of you, Rose, if — by Jove!—you're not already! I've often thought, I've wondered, it's something which has come in you bit by bit; if you didn't have it I don't think a man like him would want to marry you."

I said I didn't see. . . . "Then he is my sort, after all?" My father buried his head in his hands. "Can't you tell I'm jealous? Can't you tell I don't want you to leave me? I've brought you up myself since you were knee-high to a grasshopper, and it seems now I've done it even better than I knew. You're too perfect; you're to be whisked off by some one who'll continue the good work beyond my humble capabilities. I wanted you to stay where you were, I'm satisfied with you as you are — you, my daughter, Rose Carson. I was proud — every time I saw you I remembered that you were my daughter; now every time I see you I shall remember that you are another man's wife. I wish you weren't so perfect, then he wouldn't want you. I wish — yes, I do — I wish you weren't such a lady!"

"What do you wish?"

He came over to me slowly, like a great wounded beast. A stranger, entering suddenly, might have thought that he'd been drinking. "I don't know what I'm saying, Rose, I wouldn't wish you any different from what you are, it's your being a lady that's saved you."

"From Simon Featherly?"

"Yes, from him — and from other men like him." He turned sharply. "For you have been saved, haven't you? You're just as young, just as what they call innocent, as

any girl alive; there are things you don't know anything about—aren't there? And now this man—now you're going to be married. He says not for the present, that he's ready to wait, but what does his waiting matter?"

Thus was consent given. I never saw the letter which Featherly wrote, nor my father's answer to it. Other letters passed, a very charming one, appreciative of the parental generosity, cognizant of the responsibility involved: "I shall always regard Rose, my dear Carson, as a very sacred trust transferred from you to me. I hope I shall never forget the honor done me both by you and by her, and never prove myself unfit. When we meet each other again — and you must know that will be as soon as I can possibly arrange it we will be united by the bond of our mutual love for her, and in the meantime don't think of me as a marauder, a man who comes a thief in the night and steals away your treasure. treasure is yours, and so will always be. I envy you, and the only consolation I have for not myself being Rose's father is the privilege it leaves clear to me of being her husband." My father was left speechless, but visibly impressed. sent me off to a strange interview with Mrs. Cassagryer, in which we found ourselves on superficially equal ground. I remember I pitied her for the ordeal she nevertheless met manfully.

It was a queer, much occupied time, the period of my engagement. I can't render it now as I would like; it stands out in my memory only here and there, bits of talk, impressions, the amelioration of my father's antagonism until at last he viewed it only as the much-to-be-desired result of my perfection. That summer in London he and I were very close; my impending marriage made us feel we should be together

while we might. I began by finding him less big than I had remembered, his beard less red, his laugh less loud; but gradually the full measure of these things came back to me; his place — momentarily filled by a different kind of bigness — was restored; I discovered that he had the style of his type, he was still Jovian. He liked to appear in public with me, come and get me for supper, after the theater and never tired of the turned heads, the public admiration. While seeming to ignore it, as a king might very well ignore the notice he created on the Mall, in reality not a jot escaped him. "Rosie, did you see how we were spotted by those people near the door?" It will be seen how much my public aspect counted, even with those who cared about me most. . . .

I remember one of these suppers, enhanced by the presence of Mrs. Cassagryer and the great Featherly himself, who had come across seas for a three days' visit. I beg her pardon for the personality, but I remember the author of "Warp and Woof" on that occasion achieving a distinctive boldness with a black low-cut dress and a cigarette. No one but an Englishwoman, and an Englishwoman on her own ground, could have remained quite so bold and yet quite so what my father called a lady — she might have been a duchess. Featherly was immaculate and fine and glad to be there; I felt myself the least of the group the Carlton supper guests stared at. It was the one time in all my life, that period of my engagement, when I felt myself for more than a moment overwhelmed by bigness. I had to readjust myself to the new order. I don't think that people generally take these readjustments into consideration enough; they imagine themselves as running on smoothly from one set of circumstances to the next without any loss of impetus or balance. But for me I haven't found it so.

Life continued. After London I came back to America and went on tour; what with mine and the other companies Daniells had sent out, the country must have been submerged in "Folly." I took the larger cities — Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Cleveland, Detroit — again Chicago — Omaha, Denver. I went north to Seattle and south to Los Angeles — I remember a week at Butte, Montana — I crossed the Arizona desert and became involved in a train wreck near the Mexican border, where I overstepped the boundaries of caste as definite in the theater as elsewhere — and waxed sentimental under Southern stars with the young assistant manager. Our sentiment was rudely interrupted by two half-breeds who had had too much of some vile Mexican drink; the next time I saw the young man we had reached the advanced civilization of San Antonio and he had returned to his usual shirt-sleeved commonplaceness. I forced myself to look at him in order to realize to the full the nevertheless innocent measure of my iniquity.

We came east by way of New Orleans and then north, Washington our final resting place before New York and Simon Featherly and the click of the latch in my own front door.

I wish I could give a fuller impression of my first real view of my own country; but the impression which I had myself was so mixed with other things — I was, as I say, in a period of change — that I remember very little about it. It's become merged in my memory with later views; I don't get at it fresh at all. It gave me a sense of vastness, I know, of immense untrammeled spaces dotted here and there with clots

of people — a sense of prosperity and possibility and on the whole wonderful decency. I was received everywhere with a kindness I didn't know the world still had time for; I made friends, and it was like seeing people whisked back and forth on the screen before a magic lantern slide. I encountered unexpected zones of a culture and knowledge before which my own bowed low; I went into charming houses whose owners wore French gowns and proper evening clothes. And yet it wasn't either London or New York. Perhaps my appreciation was deafened by the roar of the train. We roared, we raced; we went from snows to waving palms; the colors of the desert were ours and the sun-tipping mountain peaks; we left behind us a straight light trail of smoke and a straight long track; and everywhere we were paid toll, we took our Some of the money people paid us came solidly from the yield of the land, the miles of grain, the mines, the fruit, the farmlands; some of it came more imaginatively from the confidence born of these things, speculations, fortunes on paper; a great part of it was doubtless by certain standards come by dishonestly, manipulated away from its rightful users — spoils — booty.

It didn't matter; we took our toll of it, and in part we paid it back direct in fuel for our engines and lodgings and a blaze of lights and in thousands of other ways; and part we kept to do with as we willed, Daniells and I, down to the little boy who called the acts and whose ambition it was to be a master-electrician. For him—as for many others—the spotlight had a soul.

I came back to Washington Square. I remember cleaning women on every stair landing and Mrs. Cassagryer riding the storm. There was an hour in Daniells' office when I

refused to re-sign with him — he took it much more calmly, and as Simon Featherly had said he would, than I had thought possible. I began to attribute to my promised husband powers almost occult. He asked me to marry him, to end his waiting, but I still hovered at the brink — he standing by with his hands in his pockets, unwilling to precipitate my plunge. Then I said I wouldn't, not till the following autumn; and then, having settled my affairs, I indulged in the luxury of being ill. I was standing on a ladder, hanging a picture on my parrot-covered wall; and, careless of balance, I leaned over and lost it altogether.

I found myself in bed with a broken arm and a sensation in my side which prevented my moving. I tried to raise myself on my pillow and so discovered it. I wouldn't accept the assurances of doctors that my injuries weren't serious, and for days I wept for my lost vocation; I felt sure I should never dance again, but be always helpless, an invalid in that room filled with parrots. Parrots on branches, parrots in flight, parrots their beaks open, screaming, and one old bird with his claw crooked to a large purple fruit, — I counted six different sorts, and then the designer's invention had given out and he was forced to a vain repetition. I turned my face to the wall and abandoned myself to my misfortunes. one morning I woke up with the sun streaming rosy through my window curtains and for a priceless moment forgot what had befallen me. I took an interest in breakfast and settled myself snugly to convalescence; it lay out fair before me, a smooth road of peace, a Christmas stocking filled with the packages I'd never had time to undo the strings of. There were studies and subjects I should look into, authors I should read, games to play; I pictured whole mornings enlivened and illumined by making caricatures in red chalk. And not the least of these prospective pleasures was the fact that when the hour came for them they could, if I so willed, be foregone.

But the pleasures were rather in the contemplation than in the achievement. As I gained strength, my peace left me; I chafed at restraint; I would have given all the leisure in the world for one good day of work; I envied infinitely the people who walked about as they liked and whose proudest ambition was greater than to be carried to the sofa in the library adjoining. I compassed that and lay there, my bruised side soft in cushions, the hand of my uninjured arm very white and I think I took on a spirituality which my always perfect health had never allowed, a Madonna with bound tresses, while inwardly I chafed and meditated less spiritually than was my wont. Mrs. Cassagryer told me it was an unrivaled opportunity to cultivate my soul. I didn't find it so; instead I cultivated Simon Featherly. to see me every afternoon at five and I flirted with him as if I hadn't a lifetime before me — I lay on my sofa and made long eyes at him and gave him an altogether false impression of the character of his future wife. I saw in him the reflection of my unguessed possibilities; for the first time I felt I was marrying him because I wanted to.

I remember that time very well; I quite separate it from the general period of my engagement — both from what followed and what went before. My father was in London, and he didn't come to me, for he made out my accident even less serious than it was. I had wound up my affairs; I was in every way exceptionally set adrift from my usual moorings. I had the temporary isolation of a person awaked

from sleep; I was cut off in the same way from the ordinary immediate past. My horizon was dwarfed and Simon loomed colossal. I grew to live for the hour of his visit, had myself bedecked against his coming; I remember a wrap of Chinese embroidery, and as the days warmed — for it again was spring — lighter raiment, pale muslins and laces and the delicate handiwork of French convents.

A year had gone by since we'd met outside the theater and since I'd driven home with Katie in the cab and seen prophetically what time had in store; and no year had ever gone so quickly or held at once so much and so little. In certain ways it had a good deal to show, my engagement, twelve thousand dollars I had made and hadn't spent, my break with Daniells; and last of all the breaking of my own bones. Life had progressed and been arrested — my own attention had been arrested by a man whom I now knew little better than I had at the beginning. When I had seen him walking up the path at Shoreham I had known him then. He had paused halfway, thrown away his cigar, and then come on rapidly, his intention seeming to shine forth quite ominous through these actions — in a measure it still shone. He had broken my engagement to his nephew, he had waited, — waited almost as a gambler waits for the turn of a card; and then, all in good time, he had my promise for himself, and now he was waiting again, reluctant to force the play.

Time wasn't awkward to a man like that. I couldn't imagine him as either young or old — he stood still. From my sofa I gazed at him, and whether he bent to put a stick on the light wood fire or poured himself a cup of tea or paced from door to window, he yet kept this quality of stillness which his sure, deft movements didn't trouble.

I was married on the twenty-ninth day of September in the year nineteen hundred. The date is inscribed in the city records, and the newspapers of that morning gave the event varying prominence according to their natures. The wedding was very quiet, taking place in Washington Square, and the ceremony was performed by an ecclesiastic friend of Simon's.

There were present a bare dozen of relatives friends — my father, Mrs. Cassagryer, Simon's two married sisters, one of whom was the mother of Barney, who himself refused to come, Daniells, who forgave all and came, Syms in a waistcoat that filled the sense, and Valentine Seymour, now Mrs. Black, startlingly lovely and doing me the honor to come all the way from Colorado, leaving behind her a husband and baby. There were some other people there, the sort one never sees except on occasions of marriage or death, but who have then the claim and right of kinship — also some men who were intimates of Simon, and who, though they admired both his courage and his choice, felt, I could see, that he was making a mistake. They had a very great air of standing by him in the hour of his need. They were allabsorbed in this kindly act, but I think found time to stare at the austerity of my drawing-room and the conservativeness of the neighborhood in which I lived. One of them — Keith Wadley — knew Valentine, and rather disturbed the prearranged order by insisting on sitting next to her at breakfast. A Hungarian band played in a foliaged recess back of the stairs, and the table was placed on a raised platform at one end of the room. We sat about its three sides as though for a "Last Supper," and the end of the room we faced had its wall banked with pale roses. I remember their

scent stirred by the breeze from the open widows, and Syms' obvious pride in the success of his effect, for we had given him a free hand.

I remember everything as if it were yesterday. That morning waking and sleepily noting the changes in my familiar room, the pictures taken from the wall, the silver from the dresser, the very new leather bag with big gold monogram that gaped at me from the stand — it was all strange and dimly significant. And then I realized that my wedding day had come, another corner turned in the long road, a new scene set up. Downstairs the decorators were arranging a frame for the flowers and their hammers had the old accustomed ring — "Fifteen minutes," — and then I found myself waiting for the old warning at my door, — "The curtain's up, Miss Carson." "Thank you, I'll be right there—" The bells in Folly's cap were wedding bells now, they jingled in my ears. Everything was very loud or very bright, the autumn wind blew sharp, and in the Square the leaves of the trees were dark and vivid against the sky. The world had been washed in a clarifying pigment, it went on at a swifter pace, my perception of it I know was quite unclouded, again for the first time I saw. I didn't think at all, I wasn't either happy or unhappy, it was a different state altogether — an intense concentration upon the present, minute by minute. I remember it without a flaw, and have difficulty in now selecting and recording among an embarrassment of riches.

Everybody was very busy, there was a great deal of moving about both below and above, the front door slammed, the telephone was possessed of a devil, flustered servants kept asking questions about unimportant matters; my father reached a condition of nerves only relieved by half a tumblerful of undiluted whiskey. And I in the midst, in a high calm, watching my new world, and bathing and dressing and partaking of my usual tea and toast. I had foreseen that Katie would be useless at such a crisis, and I had been able to secure the service of the woman who had been my dresser at the theater. She helped me on with my soft fine clothes and did my hair for me and polished my eyebrows. I didn't wear a wedding gown, but one of white cloth and a big hat with flowers; she poised that skillfully, and edited the contents of my bag. I shall always remember her impassive professional efficiency, unimpaired by the near presence of what is admittedly the great circumstance of human life. I asked her an unnecessary question: "Have you ever been married, Mrs. Atkins?"

"Indeed, yes, Miss, twice." She fixed a hairpin. "I have a little boy twelve years old."

When she had done with me, she hurried off to her regular employer, who played a Wednesday matinee, and I gave her a rather generous tip. "I want you to get something for your little boy — something that you wouldn't have got if you hadn't come to me."

"Thank you, Miss Carson; you're very kind, I'm sure. I hope you'll be very happy, and I'm sure your husband's a most fortunate man."

I smiled back at her, but met with no further response. Here I was on my wedding day trying to pierce the shell-like exterior of a theatrical dresser! I laughed to myself and went in to see how my father was weathering the storm. "I feel as if I were going to a funeral, Rosie, these black clothes in daylight. . . . They're to stand in a pleased

semicircle, aren't they, and you're to take my arm, and the dragon will be there in the middle waiting for you? I'll get back a bit, and then, when the old psalm singer says, 'Who giveth this woman to this man?' why, I come forward again.

'This woman to this man' — Lord! Where is he, now?"

"Who?"

"My blessed son-in-law."

I assured him that Simon was on his way.

"Well, he ought to be; he's old enough to know it. Why doesn't he take some one his own size?"

And then began the last of those futile tirades against my marriage, a last flare of parental possessiveness. a child — a child away from her own father!" He always came to that, and then, after calming and soothing, he went down to see how things were arranged for the slaughter. Everything was beautiful; Syms was there with his coat off and a managerial light in his eye, the men were putting the final touch. Syms seized me. "Now, Miss Rose, if you'll just stand 'ere a moment, I can tell the effect — "

I lent myself to his designs.

"Good Lord!" said my father.

"It's good, is it not?" my teacher asked him. "Now kneel. Ah — that's right! Tom, make that smilax fall softer, it wants to copy the kneelin' figger."

I looked up from my genufications into the smiling countenance of him who was the prime cause of all this. He had "There — you see —" come into the room unannounced. I said to my father, "Simon's here safe and sound!"

"Was your father afraid I'd be lost to all shame and not appear?"

"In fact, Featherly, I was rather living in hopes."

"Ah — you mustn't feel like that!"

A carriage drove up, supposedly containing guests, and we fled in varying directions, I to find Mrs. Cassagryer and recall her to her duties as hostess.

The ceremony itself was the least memorable part of the day. The audience stood about, as my father had said, in a semicircle, — not pleased, perhaps, but expectant and interested, — and the Rev. Eliot Leddenhead guided us through the mazes of the marriage service. Simon was paler than usual, and my father redder; and beyond that, I remember Valentine, a creature of shining grace, — in the early days I hadn't realized how beautiful she was. I remember thinking that she seemed more like a bride than I; she was dressed as for a sacrifice, bedecked and garlanded, the grace of her complimented by the prepared festivity of her surroundings. I was more severe, white and slim, a straight exclaiming note. My high calm kept up; Mrs. Cassagryer afterwards told me that I had had the gravity and the intensity of a small shy child at a party or on a visit. I was fairly silent, I know, for, clear as my memory seems to be, I can recall nothing that I said after my early comment to my father upon the fact of Simon's arrival. Conversation went on all about me, at breakfast my father waxing voluble — I hoping very much that no one else would recognize his state, for all the morning he'd been fortifying himself with Scotch and now Pol Roget was the final straw. He addressed himself to Barney Grant's mother and said something rather unfortunate about the circumstances of Simon's introduction to us.

"Yes," said that lady irrelevantly, I thought, "Barney was so very sorry that he was unable to come. But you know he's so very busy down town. The marvel is that my

brother himself was able to get away — but for his own wedding, of course — and she's such a charming girl, your daughter, such a very charming girl. . . ." She spoke of me as though I wasn't present. I remember at this the cocked amusement of one of Simon's friends.

Daniells and Syms, who were not on the best of terms, for the time forgot their enmity; a relative of mine — an old lady with an ear trumpet — entered into lively talk with Simon's other sister; Valentine carried on a sufficiently rapid flirtation with Keith Wadley, whom she already knew and from whom I heard her accept a rather recklessly given invitation for a Sunday at Hempstead. It seemed to me that these people had gathered at my house more on their own account than on mine; they looked at me a good deal — those who didn't know me well — but I took their attention hardly as much as though, in the more usual course, they were paying for their seats. It would have been very surprising if I'd offered to dance for them, but it would have at least required them to pause a decent moment in their pursuit of their own affairs. With one or two notable exceptions I felt everywhere a lack of realization of the mighty step Simon Featherly and I were so fearlessly taking — I hardly realized it myself.

The accumulative hours went on, we got off in a big new motor car, there was a general gathering on the steps to see us go, and people in the houses along the block peered from their windows. It struck me then that the attention I attracted was too great instead of too little; what was it to them — my city neighbors — whether I married or whether I didn't? I felt strongly the light of the public glare. We went straight to the house in Madison Avenue, where it was Simon's whim that we should stop for a while before sailing

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for Europe, and there also I felt the public glare in the trained expressionless faces of Simon's servants. I knew they thought they knew, I was conscious of the butler's gase turned upward as I mounted the stair, and I should have liked to have paused with a finely flung assurance that my husband and myself were creatures of another world altogether — a world no one but ourselves had the grace to know anything about.

END OF BOOK II



BOOK III



BOOK III

XXV. SIMPLICITY

In this book there has already been enough — in fact too much — of talk about the difficulties and the problems involved by the task I've undertaken. I've been all along too confidential — not only in the simple frankness of the work itself, but in the way I've left wide the door of the workshop. I'm to be seen there, knocking about, my cuffs rolled back; it's a spectacle which takes away from the full beauty of the illusion, it's like watching a dinner cooked and then eating it afterwards. And yet it comes back to me that there is no reason why I shouldn't use the method which pleases me best. My finished product will be consigned to some sort of locked receptacle where it will indefinitely remain, a package of awkward shape. Under lock and key I shall conscientiously place it, and the workshop door is surely no wider than the lock. The ultimate fate of my Big Horse I don't pretend to foretell; as I said at the beginning, some legal executor may bundle it in with a brocade of doubtful antiquity and a scrapbook of early press notices. This vagueness of mine also excuses the intrinsic frankness of the work; I am only held in by my own very private and personal sense of what is fit; there are confidences one does not make even to one's self. Those I shall continue to respect.

In lighter matters I shall go along with a certain cheerful indiscreteness as heretofore, blinking the fact that much I

shall have to say touches very closely on situations and conditions which might still be affected and changed by being openly discussed. All my faith is in the locked receptacle — in that and the healing hand of Time.

To-day I've been in a light mood — reckless — I could almost divine a pleasure in being wholly ribald, the sort of schoolboy barbarism which has its expression in loud laughter and clownish jest. If I but had the good fortune to know a nice family of old ladies I could descend in their midst and be quite unseemly. I think the matter is that I'm so absurdly healthy; other women use up their surplus energy by having ailments. I have my Muse, but to-night I'm false to her and essay snatches of song — it's a habit I don't like and hope I shan't form; I should hate to become the type of woman who always sings on her way downstairs and preludes her entrances by a trill out of key. "Beneath thy window — When the dawn is breaking —" It is, as Simon used to say, too sudden. We had a housemaid once who asked us, while she made our beds, to

"Take me back — back — to Baltim-o-o-r-e, This actin' bus'ness cert'ny makes me s-o-o-r-e — ",

Hardly the ditty with which to assail a theatrical family. . . . Last night I didn't give to my book as I've been doing this summer of my holiday; instead of that I went for a walk. I've felt, I say, in a light mood. I wanted change — a sight of my fellows. Veiled and wrapped I went down through the village, past the houses neatly rowed and the little lawns and hedges and the metropolitan brilliancy of the village store. Suddenly from silence a girl's voice rang out in an unanswerable question: "What's the use of talkin' — when

you hear a chicken squawkin'?"... It was infinitely suggestive — an intimation that in the midst of life we are in death. I quote innocently, and so may put myself at the mercy of the more sophisticated, but the thing suited me. Why can't one copy one's canine friends and go forth to yowl at the moon quite simply? Simplicity — that's the note. Why can't we all live in a caravan — with a horse to drive like the baker man — wasn't there an old song about that?

My Big Horse in harness, hitched ignominiously to a baker's wagon — why not? The white canvas top, the plodding beast, me. . . . Me selling wares by the roadside, loaves round and square, currant buns to children, pies, great round white apple dumplings. Me — I insist upon the me all in the face of grammar — idly flicking a fly from my horse's back, leaning out from my tentlike structure and watching a flight of ducks offshore, listening to the sweep of the wind through the dune grass. I should sleep lulled by that, in among the scented hay of some friendly barn, and be waked by the sun and the crowing of cocks and the ponderous movements of big animals in their stalls. Perhaps a cat would come and lick me with her rough pink tongue, a gray cat by preference, with the pink showing like the lining of a French I wonder if I could live so, feeling the warmth of spring in the ground, summer and the days that hold it still, and the first November bleakness, then cold and driving storms, a little house somewhere near the good lights of a village and provender in the cellar stored against the winter's need. It pleases me to think I might — to imagine I could get on without all this elaborate machinery of civilization.

What would happen to me, I wonder, if I didn't have some one to do my hair and file my nails — would I file them

myself, or would they go unfiled — my hair rough? . . . A woman of thirty who doesn't take care of herself grows old. In this highly specialized age I'm a dancer, I'm relieved of all the homelier tasks in order that I may be a dancer, cared for and looked after, surrounded by the artificial amenities. The public sees to it that I don't stray too far afield.

My public — what a dear old beast it is — how it fawns for sugar plums, shows its teeth only in smiles, scatters roses in my way; and here I am, churlish to its endearments and seeing beauties undreamt in stonier paths and stronger fare. I think it is that I'm not altogether happy or content; I'm searching about for the fly hidden in my ointment; sometimes I miss Simon and forget the ways in which our marriage was unsuccessful. These latter pages have recalled to me much that I had thought forgotten; as I write it comes back, every word I write has behind it a memory—that in turns calls other memories — they clamor. Certain aspects of the house in Madison Avenue — I always held a theory that Simon breathed it from the ground, it is so peculiarly his own, every stone and carving, every vista, the polish of the woodwork, the dignified richness of the front door. . . . It all is informed by his presence, it everywhere bears evidence of the soul and the mind, even the body of my former husband. I see him there now, see him in this more domestic as well as in his merely property-owning character. Simon shaving — doing it too with a deftness which raised the simple task to a height of art, a sleight of hand performance by a magician who was in the habit of doing tricks more difficult. Simon of a Sunday morning leisurely at breakfast, reading the papers, the pile of those he'd read growing at one elbow, the one of those

he hadn't decreasing at the other. Simon watching me it seemed a house inhabited by eyes.

I remember him, fine and hard, cold through his passion, in a measure impersonal through his very personal concern with his wife. I've seen him with the light gone out, the gray stubble showing, almost old — at least careworn — every year plain, an extinct volcano. I came in upon him once — this in the library that had the French tapestry — and had the privilege of hearing him swear, not at me, but at a man who had come to see him and who had evidently in some way made himself obnoxious. It wasn't a casual oath that my husband got rid of, but a remarkably cultivated blasphemy; accustomed as I was to the expletives of my father I hadn't known the thing capable of such variations. Simon at the end chastened by the troubles I was in part responsible for, softened by the adversities I was thought to have brought him. . . . A flash of that, there was, of softness and a doubt that perhaps it was he himself who had failed — and after that his house the emptier for my absence.

But most of all I remember him welcoming me there as a bride — his — "Here we are, Rose — "And then — "You're tired, you'll like to rest." He rang for his house-keeper whom he directed to attend my needs; he named me as Mrs. Featherly. "See," he said, "that Mrs. Featherly has everything."

I remember his pausing — looking at us both — then turning sharply. I remember the shutting of his study door as cover for his embarrassment.

I didn't particularly like to rest, but it would never have occurred to me to upset the arranged order. The housekeeper brought me tea, I was shown a very charming room which

was evidently to be mine, opening out of the one that could never have been any one's but Simon's. I took off my hat, I washed my hands — my wedding ring clicked against the marble of the wash basin — I explored great lighted wardrobes where clothes that were the empty spirit of Simon hung in waiting obedient rows, I sat down to the tea I didn't want.

I was in the midst of that when Simon appeared out of space and took his place by my side. "Well," he said, "here we are—"

And then — "Well, how do you like it?"

"Very much indeed," I said.

"Ah — I was afraid you wouldn't."

I don't think we either of us were sure whether we referred to the holy state of wedlock or the chintz upon the wall. We chose the chintz. I said it was exactly what I had tried for in the guest room in Washington Square — I had sent to London — done everything. . . .

"I don't know where this came from — I think from Hampton's."

"Syms knows a very good man on Fourth Avenue—" I promised Simon his address, though of course, as he pointed out to me, stage decoration required such a very different touch that one could never tell.

"No, he might not do at all."

"But are you thinking of having some work done? I didn't know—"

It seemed he might build a cottage somewhere out of town — I might care to go there when I could get away. In the summer, perhaps.

I remember this talk largely because it was so unmemorable, one of the most commonplace we had ever had, the least

illumined. The formally set tea, our rather ceremonious clothes, the quality of our talk, all hardly combined for the appearance of a honeymoon; we might rather have been enduring the horrors of an afternoon call, I the bored hostess, he the bored guest. It was as if matrimony had shown up what strangers we were.

- "Does it suit you to dine at eight?"
- "Absolutely. Do you want me to dress?"
- "You're very lovely as you are. For myself I think I'll get off these awkward garments—" He flapped his coat tails. "I should feel more easy in something shorter. You don't mind?"

"Why should I?"

He had risen and stood smiling down at me, then stooped and kissed me delicately before he went into his room, where I presently heard him moving about. I went downstairs to the library and looked over a portfolio of old engravings. I might have read but I didn't feel in the mood for mental effort and a work not requiring it would not have held my attention. I abandoned the engravings and from an examination of the lower bookshelves took to pacing up and down; the room was twenty-eight feet long, it gave me space. Simon came in, this time very much at home in his own house; he lit a cigar, opened The Evening Post that was spread for him on his desk, he might have been unaware that I was there. At last he looked up. "Well—" he said.

I stopped short. "Now don't say, 'here we are,' because I know it!" I looked at him square and he at me. At that moment dinner was announced. The butler, coming in, must have caught our mutual appraisal full.

The next days seemed all like that — interrupted — in-

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complete. I don't know what it was I might have expected — not more. But even at the last, even the morning we sailed for Europe, it was as if the big house still mockingly held possibilities unrealized. I had passed through cataclysms in a high detached way, hardly touched in spirit; and I had been afraid, I think, of being touched too much. At twenty I steeled myself against the self-abandonment I dreaded, with the result — unlooked for — of increasing Simon Featherly's admiration. For him, at forty, Woman must have had little of mystery; I, his bride, still possessed it, he took off his hat to me — and the less I cared what his action was, the lower his obeisance. He could be high and detached also, he could treat in that way much which should have been excused and illumined by human emotion. I remember his voice, which should have been charged, coming coldly — metallic like the voice in a phonograph; I remember him speculative, as if he yet waited. But I didn't care in him for all this he so admired in me, there were times when my sense of him was nearer hate than love. Mystery, fear, the unplumbed depths of his controlling mind, the sheer power against which I strained: I would have had him simpler.

I could have dealt with him better if his hardness had been nearer to brutality. He made it so clear that I honored him; he treated me always with the respect that was my due both as Rose Carson and as his wife; in approving me he to that extent approved himself, we were one. The fact of our being one by every law made my aloofness singularly piquant; it was as if, tired of his own face so familiar in the glass, he had waked in the morning to discover there a new one. He studied me, and had the delight of studying himself. My youth and beauty, my much discussed qualities of mind, were all a part

of this augmented ego; he searched it out as he might have searched some departure of his soul into lands hitherto unexplored, and that his search was half unrewarded lent it spurs. He had acquired a wife with the luck — he knew, thank Heaven! it was not with the money — which had secured him the canvas attributed to Van Dyck. She was part of himself, and yet, exquisitely, not so much his as the big dark portrait that brooded from his wall. He had a very lively sense of the value of his acquisition.

"You're much too good to me," I remember saying to him apropos of some fresh consideration. I remember his look. "I wonder if you're really humble," he said, "or if your not taking my goodness to you as a matter of course puts a wider distance between us. . . ." By which it will be perceived that whatever else my husband was, he wasn't a fool.

I remember seeing him tall and white and strange, not as I was in the habit of seeing people; and of those early days my memory holds a less memorable vision—myself in the midst of preparation for the day, focusing what thought I had on the delightful color and texture of some stockings lately donned, Simon coming in very bright and shaven and following the line of my bent gaze.

"Les petits pieds —" he said.

I capped him. "De soie dorés —"

For a moment detachment wavered, more then than ever. The sunlight made the light rugs lighter; in the street below was the perfect quiet of morning and Sunday, a quiet it seemed left to us to break. The street, the whole city, the big house itself, had besides quiet an emptiness it seemed left to us to fill. We quoted French verse aptly. Once before — at Delmonico's — we had held the center of the stage and

used it inadequately, but hardly so inadequately as now. Then the situation between us had been simpler — uncomplicated by marriage — I had felt I knew him too well, had an instinct for flight; I knew him too little now, and would have broken his remoteness, were it not for the risk of so losing my own.

XXVI. OF NO IMPORTANCE

Our married life had the peculiar distinction of being carried out quite as we had originally planned it. Wherein, perhaps, lay the secret of its later failure. Simon Featherly had made it clear from the beginning how little he desired any real upheaval, and after the first inevitable wonder we settled back to our respective ways. He, a power rather than a man, and I the little Rose, the slant-eyed figure painted on a tomb, the jewel of the crown; and yet, strangely, we were man and wife. All that is what we were to each other, to ourselves we settled back remarkably unchanged. In spite of being married we weren't tied, we were together too rarely to have in common the little daily interests of domesticity, we didn't rub off on each other, if I may use the expression. He had his affairs, which were many and exacting, I had my dancing no less exacting — a final say in the management of the theater my husband helped me to build, and the necessity of living up, not only to the glory of Rose Carson, but to the new and greater glory added by the name of Featherly. I had to do more than aspire to heights, my pride made me attain them.

I grew to know what the work meant that lifts itself out of itself. I studied with a deep intention I had never had before. In Paris I studied with the great Carnavali, then a little old woman in a black wig, ugly and stocky, with over-developed leg muscles and misshapen toe joints; but I learned

from her much I had never learned from either Makaroff or Syms because I had in me more capacity for learning.

She did me the honor to say, of course, that she taught me nothing; she babbled compliments in the rapid French I found it difficult to follow; but I didn't go to her for her compliments, I watched the manner with which she came into a room, the stiff old grace which still lingered in her bow. think Syms had trained me to be too boneless; as Carnavali said, the dance is never the contortion. I didn't wish to end in green and gold with a toy snake for company. I told her that and she laughed and said I was after all an American; ' before she had doubted my nationality, because the Americans she had known had desired to attain their ends all in an instant and I was willing to take my time. Mme. Carnavali spoke out of a deep sad knowledge, she had had American pupils before, ladies, she said, of the highest eminence. would find room for a lesson between déjeuner at the Ritz and the fitting of a gown by Doucet; one, she remembered, whom she might recommend highly as a blanchisseuse, but never — They came, they took a charming never — as a dancer! apartment, they lived charmingly, and for the pleasure they had they made their studies the excuse. Sometimes it was dancing, sometimes painting, sometimes music — dancing more rarely perhaps than the others because in little time it made less show. Studies — ma foi! She wondered what their husbands might be thinking of — and then, with a little twisted smile, other matters, no doubt!

I too had taken a charming apartment, together with Mrs. Cassagryer, who joined me when Simon's occupations called him, and who was deep in a new book. But Carnavali found no resemblance between me and the ladies she talked of; I

was far too busy to lunch at the Ritz and my sessions with Doucet were brief. I was an artist—of the elect—and in the first year of my marriage I was again only that. "The cup in the one hand, the Koran in the other—"

I never have cared for Paris for its own sake the way so many people do — thereby proving myself a barbarian — but somehow I don't think I ever shall. People say it has a quality which gets into the blood, you stay and stay, and at last find that you can't be happy anywhere else; but I always go there with a definite aim and that accomplished I leave with neither delay nor regret. There are certain kinds of clothes which can't be had anywhere else, and certain stage properties — lessons — the Louvre — and in one of the smaller museums a cloister garth where a gargoyle stretches his neck to the sun. But in all Paris what else is there?

Notre Dame, I suppose, fused to vitality by their great novelist, the Bois in the morning, the Champs Elysées in the afternoon, and especially in the spring a peculiar nebulous light that flickers from the heavens. Great men have lived and died, left their mark behind them, history has been made there, philosophy and art, science, everywhere the results of that very usable French intelligence which with them takes the place of the more solid Anglo-Saxon mind — if you talk of Paris to praise it you'll never stop. Yet I myself admit all that and still hate the place with an unreasoning personal hatred, down to the very core of its old wise rottenness — old enough and wise enough to be less of the last. Absorbed as I was with my work, leading a charmed existence, protected from the elements in every way, there was a great deal of Paris with which I naturally had but a gloved contact; and not being interested in what are called conditions, I didn't go out of my way to study either poverty or vice. It seems to me one doesn't have to.

A girl who has been on the stage since she was sixteen, no matter under how favorable circumstances, and who has had before that a rather unconventional surrounding, isn't a wholly lamblike creature; she supposedly can stomach the usual spectacles presented by a great city. I'm not a prude, neither do I faint at the sight of blood; though it wasn't blood that I saw in Paris, I seemed, rather, to smell it. Cruelties — horrors — they were in the air, however filtered for one's lungs. I saw faces that made my young flesh recoil. I think my marriage must have waked me to possibilities I hadn't realized before, it couldn't have been all Paris. I had long talks with Mrs. Cassagryer: "Surely things aren't as bad in New York, or in London —?"

"In London they're pretty bad, my dear."

"But not like this! I think the whole place would sell its soul for the price I pay for a pair of slippers! And such souls!" I was bowed with the sorrow of the world, which had come to me late.

One day I came in to where my friend was quietly writing and announced that I was through.

"Through with what?"

"Everything — this dreadful city — I leave." Which I didn't eventually do, as I hadn't taken all that Carnavali could give me and some dancing costumes I was having made weren't done; but these obstacles didn't detract from the momentary decisiveness of my intention.

"What have you seen now?" said Mrs. Cassagryer, looking up from the dictionary she had been consulting.

My carriage had been blocked at the Place Vendome and

as I waited there a woman had made her way out to me; the middle of the crowded street had no terrors for her, she assailed me with a quick low murmur, I understood enough of what she said to be thankful the remainder was beyond me.

I was aghast. "Oh, Paula, horrors—loathesome, unbelievable—people worse than beasts—and then—she had something in her arms. She thrust it forward suddenly—"

Paula Cassagryer again looked up. "Yes, a baby."

"She pulled off the shawl she had over it, and its little body — oh, I can't go on —"

"Don't try. They hire those babies for a franc a day. How much money did you give her?"

"I don't know — all I had — it wasn't very much. She wanted to sell me some dreadful-looking roses. You say they hire them for a franc a day?"

"You ought not to drive alone in an open carriage."

I turned over this simple solution. "But it wouldn't make things really any the less frightful—"

"No, it would merely spare your Sybaritic nostrils."

"I don't wish to be spared!"

My friend put her dictionary back upon its shelf. "Things are no more frightful than one is aware of their being."

"You mean that what you don't know doesn't exist?"

"Practically — yes."

We came very near to quarrel. "You can sit there quietly at your desk and tell me that? You," I said, "who write books which deal, supposedly, with sin and sorrow and passion — all the circumstances of human life. If some horrible crime were going on across the street, wouldn't it still be going on even if you and I didn't happen to look out of the window?

Wouldn't the people concerned in it — wouldn't they be affected?—"

"Ah — they would — yes! But if we didn't look, or didn't hear, why, for us it wouldn't be going on — would it?" She put it to me dryly.

"There's very little chance," I answered, "that you wouldn't be looking! You'd be on the spot with a notebook and a camera, and the more awful it was, the more pleased you'd be. That's your profession — thank Heaven, it isn't mine — and yet I suppose yours is considered the nobler of the two. What am I, a dancer, in comparison with the author of 'Warp and Woof' and 'The Call of Life'? It goes without saying I have neither manners nor morals. you think I don't know the nasty little paragraphs that appeared in the Society News the year Simon and I were engaged — do you think I don't know what people thought? Oh, it was kept from me — carefully kept from me — people have been awfully good about keeping things from me ever since I was sixteen. But that didn't make the print of the News any the less clear, did it, or what people thought any the less general? Because I didn't hear till later all the rather disagreeable details about Valentine's marriage to Penny Black it didn't make them wait to happen till I heard them. Because as a child all sorts of things went on around me that I didn't quite understand, it didn't mean that my immature understanding limited the pace. You see, you don't care it doesn't matter to you - deformed babies - slander - the sins of one's nearest and dearest — you jot it all down neatly in a little book and so attain to honor and glory. Good Lord - I don't believe even the things you see really exist for you, it's all meat for a wild orgy of distorted facts called fiction. . . . "

Mrs. Cassagryer took it with great good nature. "It seems we've drifted a little away from the main issue. Will you get a closed carriage or do you intend to leave, as you said?"

It came to me that I couldn't leave, there was Carnavali and clothes. "I'll do neither!" And inwrapping the simple statement with a fold from my new teacher's mantle of majesty, I made my exit. Later I apologized, I asked forgiveness and was told there was nothing to forgive.

I spent the whole of that first winter in Paris, studying, picking up all sorts of garments and draperies and furniture the carved teakwood chairs are of that vintage and the winged bull who stands guard in the lobby of the Chorean Theater as I say, very much occupied with things artistic and in daily communication with Syms, who was in New York, deep in plans. The new abode of Terpsichore was coming on apace. Though it was neither a railroad nor a river, my father was taking an interest in it and used his professional influence to secure some very favorable contracts. He sent me a most illuminating photograph of ground torn up, machinery rampant, a small shirtsleeved figure that he had marked "S. F.," the which I doubted. It seemed Simon and he had formed the custom of happening in upon each other on unoccupied evenings and, as far as I was able to make out, talking about me. At the distance of Paris I was a bond instead of a contention. At any rate they must have done each other a great deal of good, as one mixes oil and vinegar to the benefit of both. I imagine moments of strangeness. . . .

The one smooth and fine, the other flaming, the one cold as charity, the other with a warmth reaching to exuberance—and yet, with all their differences, having resemblances also. Big men, big horses, both. Men with a capacity for work or

fight, even for play, with an energy that seems to gather force almost by the power of its own impetus. Both, in their separate ways, loving life and beauty, — my father perhaps in excess, my husband bringing to that, too, the same exactitude of mind and sense which my father reserves for the more delicate problems of his profession. I think my father takes both pain and pleasure much as the gods send it; he follows impulse as he can, so balancing the weary calculations of his labors; Simon's labors bring in themselves an element of chance, an element which in his personal life he usually avoids. He gambles on a scale. These two sitting on either side of the Italian fireplace in Madison Avenue talking about me, who to a certain extent blends them all, the impulses and the calculations together. . . .

They didn't always sit there, they couldn't have always talked about me. They took each other to their respective haunts as two friendly dogs might exhibit for one another's benefit, as a last mark of confidence, the hiding places of their particularly valued bones. My father dined at some of Simon's clubs, and repaid his hospitality in kind. Finding his son-in-law lonely no doubt in the absence of his spouse, he was moved to pity and "took him along" upon what I gather must have been some very remarkable sojourns. They both sent me carefully detailed accounts, so I am in a position to These trysts usually began with dinner, included an act or so of the lighter drama, various happy meetings with other seekers after truth, a resolution — unanimously carried — to make a night of what the less initiated might already consider to be one. They drove, they walked, they made whatever possible way from one stage of the journey to the next, always with some one to call the night still young and to remark on the greatness of life. It was a form of entertainment originated by the March Hare, progressing ever onward—though tea was not the prevailing beverage. "I had no idea," wrote my father, "how in the right company 'S. F.' can soften up—but don't worry, he leaves early—" The ambiguity of the first statement relieved by the clearness of the last. . . .

Perhaps my father had discovered a side of Simon's character I myself hadn't been able to bring forth. And yet I take his "softening up" to have been in main a superficial phenomenon; he would have been essentially unmoved, apart, covering his aloofness with a skillful ease, polite where politeness was unrequisite. Finally I see the inquiry of his cigar moving out, alone, into the much-made night. "I find in your father both limitations and grandeurs —" So he wrote to Paris—"He does boyishly the things which should be done so or not at all. There are times when I feel ten years older than he, instead of being, as I am, ten years younger — I demand too much — he is free with the enthusiasms I keep for the really precious things. I took him with me to the Dallas-Pyke sale the other evening where I picked up a Gregorian altar cloth — a real treasure — at \$186, but I could see he thought I had paid too highly. Now there are things for which I might think he had --"

XXVII. FINALITIES

I came back from Paris and spent the whole of the spring and summer in New York, neck-deep in preparations for the opening of my theater, which was booked for the following I'm not going into the details of that; there were difficulties, I know, regrets for the lost Daniells, people engaged and dismissed, the joy of the fight for the fight's sake. . . . Then the purely financial side, with which Simon had more to do than I; a stock company was formed — in the financial, not the theatrical, sense — the family of Featherly were themselves guaranteed against a too great personal risk; we invested our own and other people's money; we got it back at six per cent. There are points at which my comprehension fails; it wasn't only shaving my husband graced with the charm and wonder of sleight of hand; that September, on my twenty-first birthday, I was given papers proving my partial interest in an organization which seemed to my weak feminine sense far more elaborate than the United States Government or the Roman Catholic Church. what do I do —?"

"Cut your coupons!"

"That's right, Rosie," put in my father, "you mind your knitting." We were assembled in the office of Simon's lawyer, and my father struck the obviously legal table with his fist. "Dance — that's all you have to do — and see that your employees dance. Be thankful you've got the smartest business man down town to see that both ends meet. Hey,

Featherly, what? When you go into the show business you beat them at their own game! Daniells, with his contracts and his salaries — fancy paying Rose a salary —"

"No," said Simon, "she now has the more dignified privilege of paying them herself."

The lawyer spoke: "You understand, Mrs. Featherly, that your percentage of the gross receipts of your own productions, to which you are entitled from your position as star, is quite apart from the interest on your investment. You understand that for the balance of the season, during which the Chorean Theater is leased for other productions, the lessees take upon themselves all risk of loss, paying the stockholders — of whom you and your husband are the largest — a stated rent, irrespective of the amount of their profits. The risks of your own personal productions are of course taken by the stockholders themselves, the net profits, beyond a sum to be held as surplus, to be declared as dividends —"

I say the whole thing seemed to me very remarkable. My father was right; once the true financial mind turned in the direction of the stage, the managerial profession might beware. And in this case art was wedded to finance — taste — fashion. Simon's friends on the Board twitted him, asked after the fullness of his houses, professed to feel, through him, the theatrical pulse. The Society News had a particularly pungent paragraph about a certain well-known broker and connoisseur who had recently got his young and beautiful wife a novel and expensive toy.

"Motor-cars," the paragraph went on, "up to this considered the latest thing, tiaras — never quite superseded as a method of retaining the affection of beauty — steam

yachts, Paris gowns, all these are positively antiquated, positively cheap, in comparison with a stage where one's charming wife may show that she is charming rather more conclusively than is possible at the opera, and yet with perfect propriety. It may be gratifying to one's self, but a little hard on the less fortunate — however, they pay for their discomfiture, thereby reducing the initial cost of the gift. the manufacturers of motors and tiaras we have one ray of The new fashion will hardly become general. fore her marriage the lady in question had already given proof of her ability to make use of her husband's generous present; for several seasons she has been celebrated as the youngest and the most beautiful of dancers, — it would surely be flying in the face of a kind providence to take from her her legitimate vocation. Diamonds wouldn't begin to be a substitute. We believe the Chorean Theater opens its doors on next Tuesday evening at half after eight. Here's hoping!"

But Simon didn't mind a little friendly laughter — much less myself, who had become inured through long years to the bright tinkle of publicity. People in private life can't comprehend the true professional disregard of what is said, both in print and out; and my training for the public glare had begun early, back in the days of Carson versus Carson. I belonged both by effort and environment to the conspicuous half of the world, the one upon which the other half feeds its curiosity — reads about, talks about, wonders at. I suppose I belong to it by right; there are those who unrightfully join our ranks by the sudden commission of some untoward act, who are thrust painfully, nakedly, into the light — but we, of the elect, live in it unconscious, as a person will undress in a lighted room with up-drawn shades,

unaware of the eyes of outer darkness. Simon also had the easy habit of having his affairs discussed; he belonged among people, as my father had said, who had their names in the papers; but he was of that half within a half whose illumination has an even surer source than professional esteem or domestic mischance. Tuxedo — Newport, even — his sister, the one who wasn't Mrs. Grant, owned a cottage there. He had done so himself a few years back, and had given it up because it bored him and he hadn't time to go there. He said he had been let in for the thing through a friend.

They'd make a book in themselves — Simon's friends.

Not that they were so numerous, but they made up for that in other ways. I classed them variously. Among the men, those who tried to make love to me and those who hadn't the courage — also those, queerly, who didn't admire me at all and rather pitied Simon in his folly. Among the women, those who attempted patronage and those in whom curiosity was the controlling emotion, and the rare ones who accepted me simply as Simon Featherly's wife. Then a growing class of people who made capital out of my acquaintance; I was considered smart to have to supper at Sherry's after the theater, and my Sundays were engaged ten deep. I was systematically taken up by a circle which Miss Sheffield she who had once dismissed me from her school — might herself have coveted. It was a very different thing from the general public cordiality of my earlier days, the great naïve welcome accorded the dancer by her favored land. The name of Featherly truly added glory, what was left of the Carson — and publicly it still was there — adding a flavor like that of salt to meat.

And I took this very special adulation quite as calmly as I had the more unselected sort — perhaps the first had prepared me, made the last seem not so out of the way. When I chose, I refused to pour tea at the Wallingfords' with quite as high a tone as I had formerly declined to perform similar services for the Browns of Seattle; and the more difficult I became, the more the Wallingfords battered at my door — they opened their own to me as though it were the very door of heaven, and following out that figure, I passed in or out with the nonchalance of Saint Peter himself. They didn't understand, and what they didn't understand was either very remarkable or very unimportant — they gave me the benefit of their doubt. . . . I use the Wallingfords merely as typical. I was queer, that was the solution, I might be remarkable also; I wasn't old enough to be as my husband was — eccentric. I gained an undeserved reputation for sarcasm because I didn't always see fit to explain my smile. People wondered if my head was turned, and I put a stop to this by openly admitting that I had none to turn — I, a dancer, — how could I?

"Oh, I'd hardly think that!" I remember the young man who reassured me—I can't at the moment recall his name; he used to come to the house whenever I let him. "I'd hardly think that, Mrs. Featherly; it seems to me a head's just what you have. I see you coming up the avenue in your car—I watch out for you about one-thirty Saturdays—and a bomb wouldn't attract your attention. You lie back with a faraway look in your eyes—you're not there at all. It seems to me you're always thinking about something, and you know you can't think without a head."

"Perhaps I can, I'm such a wonderful person —"

I remember the young man accusing me. "Now you're laughing! You're always laughing—what at I don't see. . . . Is there anything particularly funny about me? Didn't you like the flowers I sent you last night? I noticed you didn't wear 'em in the show. There are plenty of women who'd be glad to have me coming in like this—be glad to have me sending flowers. Married women, single women, mothers with daughters—"

"You mean daughters with mothers—"

I remember him rising, as aggressive as he might venture. "There you are again — laughing. I say, what is there so particularly funny?" And then the personality, unveiled — "Don't you find me attractive — what is it you want — the moon?"

"No, nor you!"

Later, apologies — explanations — a plea that the head, which with me hadn't turned, had been utterly lost. "I'm in the habit of taking myself seriously," he said; "other people take me seriously. If I set out to do a thing I usually get there; I have — advantages. Why do you come, with your laughing, and upset all that?"

"Why didn't Simon Featherly leave me where he found me?" I brought it out, thus voicing the young man's real inquiry.

It was the general one among those who got in at all deep—he is chosen instead of another merely to adorn the moral—why had I come? I wasn't a chorus girl, lifted by marriage to the seats of the most high—that had possibilities—nor totally insignificant, nor yet one of themselves. What the devil was I, with my laughing and my thinking and my dancing feet? Every night in my "Spring Chorus" I ap-

peared before the public gaze clad in leopard skins, leading a picked band of leopard-clad women — picked for their beauty rather than for worthier qualities — and together we danced, the whole blessed seventeen of us. We snarled, rather than smiled, slant-eyed, slim. It was the sort of dance you might dream about on a moonlit, wind-swept night, Pan playing his pipes on the hillside. There would be the sea sounding afar off, then the long gleam of white of a broken sea wall where small things stirred the lichen; a light clatter, as of little hoofs, eyes gleaming, and a sense of distance through the brake. You might go on and on. . . .

Every night, I say, I did that. I drew my leopard skins about me, and I danced; I reverted — quite starkly primitive — to the time when dryads lived in the trees and nymphs in the waters, and gods walked up and down the young earth in the guise of mortals. My Folly had been of France, my Gitana Spanish, Salome has the barbarities of Egypt, the nautch was for the pleasure of a heathen race; but the Spring Chorus was of neither place nor creed. It began at the beginning, found an echo from the old primal note. Wordless, it spoke of the silences of forests, the clamors of seas, the noon sun riding high, and the spring moon shedding silver petals on the grass. I danced with my shadow long in the dusk, shadowless at noon, I danced in a wind when the leaves and blossoms shook and fell, and then in the midst of a stillness which my movements seemed to cut. At the last I lay asleep, curved in the beaten hollow of a rock lined with rushes, slowly stretching first, and then more feigning sleep than sleeping as I listened to the early chirp of birds and watched the growing paleness in the sky. Very still I lay in my hollow, and outside, the world of reality, the world of merely contemporary things, was very still too; I held it so for as long as I would, — held it as a woman might her lover; for a moment we dreamed together. . . . Through my half-closed eyes I could see the figure of Simon standing at the back of our box, modern, immaculate. I could make out his white gloves and the whiteness of his shirt and waistcoat; more vaguely the pale mask of his face and the parted, smiling lips.

He should have been sceptred, and robed in purple.

It was no wonder that the courtesies of the Wallingfords and the devotions of young men who were in the habit of taking themselves seriously seemed to me unimportant. It was no less a wonder that their comprehension was tuned to paradoxes less complete. I remember a man, I suppose to be classed among Simon's friends, — one of those who had the courage of his convictions, — bringing this point out quite baldly: "It seems to me," he protested, "that, considering certain circumstances, you can be at times rather overly particular!"

- "The circumstances of my dancing —?"
- "Yes."
- "Well perhaps if I didn't dance I shouldn't be so particular."
- "You mean you have to be things excused in other women would not be excused in you?"
 - "No, I don't mean that —"
- "Well, I'm blessed if I see! Well—perhaps you'll get tired of dancing—" He bid farewell, buoyed by the hope that springs eternal.
- "When Rose gets tired of dancing," said my husband, who had come neatly like the third act of a comedy at

the tail of his parting speech, "why, you and I, old man, will be tired of High Finance, things will go back to the good old days when Wall Street was a cow track—"

"Cows instead of bulls —"

"I say, that's pretty bad; you need one of Walter's cock-tails!"

"Maybe I do. Thank you."

Presently I inquired the identity of Walter, who it seems was the barkeeper of a near-by club; it was characteristic both of Simon and myself that we didn't see fit to discuss the incident further. That too was one of many; I dwell upon it for representative values.

It's these representative things, people, talks, comments, that go to make it clear just what sort of a creature this self that I'm always trying to express really is. What the devil am I? — I echo the reiterated question. What was I at eight, bent upon murder and dancing, what was I, indeed, as I read classic verse under the trees of Barrington? — or later, casting a philosophical eye on the drama of the Café Marin, regarding — less abstractly — the comely figure of a boy standing in my stateroom doorway, studying with Syms, making my public bow, after that my success? Was it a child or a woman who dined with the Lord of War; and afterwards danced for him, in the big blackened room that looked out upon the lake? What sort of a girl was it who fell in love with a man for his beauty and for a summer's day, who became, as it were, "engaged," and threw him over arbitrarily at sight of more tempered metal? Then the tasteful decoration of a house — not to be ignored in egotistical reflection — a friendship, I ask pardon for the late remedied omission, with a scholarly Englishwoman,

widow of a lettered man. A strange courtship and stranger marriage, and now notoriety on the heels of fame and honor in both — jingling Folly, leopard skins in the dawn, the name of Featherly and the house in Madison Avenue. . . . And through it all an undisturbed concern with a field of art, specified almost in infancy. What is one to believe, I ask, of an entity like this? How explain?

I had come at life too young, my inconsistencies and angles were born in part of a forced precocious struggle — a triumphant meeting — with problems of maturity. At this period of which I write my whole experience was bent to twenty-one crowded years, there had been too much of it for so short a span; it seemed — thus early — that there would be too little left. I had lived as an untrained runner might run a race, the best used at the start without stint; I had been a spendthrift — not of time — but of the stuff with which time is filled. I was very young and very wise, I felt, and I don't know which I felt most, my wisdom or my youth. My youth singed by my wisdom. . . .

I had complained to Mrs. Cassagryer of being too protected — people were too good about keeping from me the sterner realities — I had been, I have said it before, shut in by footlights; it seemed to me also that I was bound by the age of the people about me; yet their wisdom was an even completer thing than mine. Youth — I was sick for it at the same time that I was spoiled for it. Barney Grant had been young, I know, and Valentine Seymour — she was young. I remembered the days when she and I were children at Barrington. She wasn't a child now, she had one of her own.

Her life had been simple in comparison to mine; or perhaps

it seemed so to me because I knew less about it. At any rate, she had gone a more undeviating road. She was one of the people whose road is well marked for them from the beginning; she had within herself all the qualities that made for the direction it would take: the vagueness, mental and moral, the spiritual discontent, the physical splendor and big teemless strength which informed the whole. She was incapable of effort or resistance; she progressed on the lines that had it least, and from her strength her stride was long.

This metaphorically — in a stricter sense the recumbent attitude suited her best; later, when Simon built his cottage out of town, she came and stayed with us for weeks, so I speak not without knowledge. . . . When we were alone she would retire to her room, where she would remain, lazily lounging away the good days, blinking at the sunlight that filtered through her drawn curtains, eating little inconsidered meals of chocolate and toast, dog-earing the pages of modern and usually passionate verse; most of the time giving herself up to a sort of light wakeful sleep, as an unoccupied cat will doze on the hearth. too, like a cat, as her stored vitality cried for outlet, she would get up and go forth, often ten miles into the country and back, carrying sandwiches and a sweater and one of Simon's canes. She would come back late, clamor for tea, bathe — she took some three baths in the twenty-four hours - dress elaborately, eat a dainty dinner, for a while flex her graceful length to the idiosyncrasies of an arm-chair breaking her repose with sudden expeditions about the room — and then would come another self-imposed withdrawal into inactivity. Whenever she thought of it, she played charmingly with her little boy. She treated her husband rather less well. . . .

If people can be like that—like Valentine and Penny Black—take grave things lightly, why not let them? It always seemed to me that the transgression of these two had a consequence beyond its worth; they paid in what was for them too great fullness—their fairy gold turned to black coal lumps weighting their pockets.

Valentine once showed me a man's necktie, blue and soft and loosely woven. "You know," she explained, "I used to carry that about with me—the way you tie a knot in your handkerchief so as not to forget—otherwise things seemed too unreal to me, too impossible, I couldn't believe . . . But when the time we'd set had come and I heard the footsteps on the flags—the tap at the pane—why, I believed then! We'd been friends before—you remember that winter I was in New York and you were dancing in 'Aladdin'—but never anything—serious. But I don't know—things grow. We happened to be staying at the same house over Sunday; I played my banjo, the others sang, we sat about on the steps—but somehow at the end I felt that wasn't all. . . .

"It wasn't — and then — you know, my dear, things grow — and then they go on. They don't stop."

Saying so little, she yet made me see it. I took it the footsteps on the flags came after the Sunday — were a continuation — went on, as she had said. There would have been no vulgar scheming, merely a following and suiting of the mood; then — suddenly — marriage, and the two sleek young things playing with the new toy of domesticity. Valentine had written me that she was happy. I imagine

her intermittently occupied with the manufacture of small garments, later laughing at her baby's curling toes, she called him the little Ha'penny; I imagine Penny Black himself finding out new profundities of life and love, profundities too deep perhaps for his light measures.

XXVIII. VALENTINE'S YOUNG MAN

I've been up to my old trick of going ahead of my story; I've been dealing with things I didn't know myself—at least so definitely—till a later time.

Valentine had come to my wedding, but after that I didn't see her very much until the spring when I took "A Spring Chorus" to London. London seemed our meeting ground. She was there with her husband; she sent me a note to the theater — she hadn't yet seen the dances, she believed that I and Penny had never met. I did the obvious thing, a box and an invitation to supper — my father still had the house near the Regent's Park; we could sup there quietly or if they preferred it we could be gayer. "At last," I wrote, "it seems as if the spell will be broken." For whenever I had planned to cast an approving eye on my friend's lesser half something had intervened, distance or accident — it was indeed a spell. He had been the link between Valentine and Barney Grant, by this road responsible for the Shoreham idyl, even for my marriage, if you went back of that — without the nephew I never should have had the uncle. He was the very magnificent young man seen and commented upon by Mrs. Cassagryer, years before, when she had paid the Seymours a call; also, more recently, the hero of the scandal which I couldn't help having heard. father once let drop that he knew his father — at least had known him and then come to some business disagreement and

so cut short the acquaintance — a railroad man named Black. It was for railroads, so Valentine had said, that they had lived so long in Colorado, and I supposed it was still in their service that they now migrated across seas — vaguely I had always associated railroads with the name of Black.

And of all the bonds which stretched forth to unite us, all the tokens by which it seemed we should meet, this last vague association proved the most important.

That night — the night they came — it was with a certain pardonable curiosity that I looked out to where I knew he would be sitting with his wife; and it was as if two separated memories suddenly fitted together. Penny Black came clear to me then as the young man who had stood in my stateroom door and watched me at my unpacking — of course, the son of Black. The years hadn't changed him, he looked absurdly young to have been through so much — young, meditative, he peered at me over his wife's shoulder much as he had once peered at me over his father's. She was ever lovely. They were a noteworthy pair, they dressed my box; glossed and fine, they reminded me of a pair of blooded horses in a show ring.

Afterwards I sent for them to come behind — it had been arranged that we should meet in my dressing room before repairing to the Regent's Park. Valentine allowed herself to be ushered in, but Penny paused with becoming modesty at the door. From that point of vantage he cut short his wife's introduction. "I have it!—"

"Have what?"

"For years I've been trying to place Miss Carson — now I have it!" He turned to me: "You were a little girl on a steamer — I had spent the night in the police station and

my father was mad and led me about like a dog on a chain — you were unpacking things out of a bag and had short skirts and long legs and your hair was tied with a bow at the back of your neck —"

Valentine simulated tragedy. "Tell me — has my husband gone quite daffy? Shall I have to send for an ambulance?"

- "No," I reassured her, "he always makes his effect."
- "I don't understand you've known him?"
- "Yes, I was a little girl on a steamer, as he says."
- "It seems to me we came to see you off."
- "My father —"
- "Your father of course W. R. Carson and you, weren't you going to London to study dancing?"
 - "Exactly!"
 - "And after that our paters had a row."
 - "I believe they did they don't speak."
- "Well," said Valentine, "as long as you both speak, it doesn't matter."

Penny Black had a charming smile. "Not a bit!" He had overcome his scruples and penetrated well into the room; Valentine had gone farther yet and was examining the paraphernalia of my dressing table; but in spite of their seeming ease they neither of them escaped the slight self-consciousness of the layman who finds himself in its very inner temple. They had come fresh from the front, where they had seen me distantly as a dancer; they now had to focus their vision to a closer view — me, as a friend, familiarly chatting, the paint of the dancer obviously paint, the leopard skins discretely cloaked. I could see they had an agreeable sense of hovering on the brink of mystery.

We turned Penny out while I changed my things, and Valentine took the opportunity to tell me how much she appreciated my kindness. "I hope, from now on, we'll see a great deal of each other — we'll be, in fact, as much friends as we used to be in the old days."

"The old days —?"

"Why, yes, before — well, you know, before so much happened —"

Our talk was restricted by the presence of the dresser. "I hope, indeed, we will. I'll go back of that and hope we'll be as much friends as we used to be at Barrington."

She kissed me. "Oh, my dear!"

Thus we took up the thread. Save for a brief crossing here and there, for years our paths had lain apart — now they lay together again. And I don't think we either of us fully realized the importance of the regained proximity. For her that importance was in a sense obvious enough. She was unhappy and she needed a friend and I did what I could. She didn't get on with her husband. As I have already said, it seems to me that the transgression of these two had a consequence beyond its worth.

"What is it —?" I asked her one day. "What's the matter?"

She had come in to see me, every line of her significant of perturbation. "Have you quarreled?" I put it to her as she left my first questions unanswered.

"No! I wish we had. Oh, Rose, I'm so tired —"

"Tired of Penny?"

"Deadly tired of Penny! I wish, as you say, we had quarreled."

"You want to leave him?"

"Yes — leave him — leave him alone. I'm like a chicken still running about whose head's been chopped off."

The significance of this charming simile was not quite clear. And then — "But what else is there —?" She told me she was never meant for marriage — she wasn't the type. She thought a good deal about her type in those days — it seemed as though she were for the first time conscious of it — it was as if it had taken three years of marriage to bring the thing quite home to her. Her bonds galled her; consciously she meditated upon evil. She admitted to me that it was hard for her to be good.

"Good —?"

"Yes — don't you call it being good to be married to a man for three years?"

It at least was outside the dictionary definitions. She had married Penny, — of course I knew why she had married him, — but beyond that, she had married him — loved him — because he was bad. Badness all along had been his marking attribute. And after three years he still was bad — she hadn't altered that — good heavens! she had no wish to alter it. If anything, and here she became contemplative, she thought him worse — at least that was the side she saw most. . . .

This was Valentine in one mood. In another her discontent would be in the background—she lived only in the present—she had no desire to leave her husband. All the marriages in the world couldn't take away from her the fact that he was hers, body and soul—to have and to hold, she said, quoting from the rite she hated.

As I say, I did what I could. But that was very little. She came to me with problems which I myself had never

had to meet; instead of teaching her, it was she who taught me. She asked advice, I gave it, and at the same time envied her for needing it. I realized afresh my own detachment. My youth — I felt I'd been cheated of it. I had known the wisdom of age and held myself aloof, but Valentine's wisdom was of another sort — there could be little aloofness there.

Somewhere I have said that the friendship between Valentine and me has been not so significant in itself as in its connection with other factors of both my life and hers. Our very fates have been woven and interwoven — her brother, it was, who induced me to crime, her friend's friend to love; I came out finally at marriage, and the clew doesn't end. . . . I have said that certain races, certain bloods, have a sure mutual attraction; I would now add to that the peculiar glamor certain people find in each other's possessions. They will covet — even steal — of one another without breaking any commandments outside the magic circle. I may as well bring it out at once that I envied my friend—not only vaguely, her field of experience, but very definitely and very concretely I envied her her husband. I didn't regard Penny Black separately from his wife — quite the reverse — she had a spell, a charm, which she cast about him and so communicated to me. He would have been in himself sufficiently prepossessing, but for me he had in addition all the fascination with which his wife had endowed him. It grew to be too much. Thought of him broke my sleep.

I couldn't believe at first that my stilled senses had waked. I didn't know what to make of it. For my marriage had had finally in that direction an effect of cooling the fires of my youth; I was hardly susceptible to the passing emotions so confusing to my girlhood. My emotions, fires, senses, what you will, were tamed and tethered, habit-formed; Penny Black was as sudden and as unexpected as any other disturber of the peace; as I say, I couldn't believe this thing which had happened. I didn't credit it at all. . . . The blond head, thrown back, as if to a breeze, the eyes direct and grave like a child's, something leonine in the curve of smile and cheek - masculinity superimposed on that - the troubling of my calm would have required more than these few tricks of personality and physique. His youth and his good looks, the curious individual charm that he had, would in themselves have been quite impotent — I do myself the honor to think it. The unreckoned power was Valentine's own; she touched him to disquiet, she quickened his spirit and beguiled his soul, filled him with the hot, sweet breath of the life she loved so well. I find it very difficult to explain. It was as if the air were charged with free electricity, as I believe it is in a thunderstorm; or, let us say, as though a wireless telegraph operator sent a message into space which was picked up and repeated by another and in turn caught accidentally by a third — I know I don't use the technical terms, but perhaps I make it clear, what I mean.

It wasn't that Valentine still loved her husband as it were for himself, — I've surely made it plain she didn't, — but this liberation in his direction of the elements and energies of love was the only way she knew of being decently true to him. He also had ceased to really care about her, but I think he was responsive, — what else could he have been? — and he found his reward in the food she afforded his meditations — and for one so round and so smooth he was of a con-

templative turn. He was an observer—particularly of those phenomena which usually didn't trouble the reflective mind—his brains perhaps were light, and he used them for the consideration of light things—his wife, for example, or himself. He confessed to waiting for the day when the former interest would be denied him, when she would tire of bothering with him at all.

"You think it will come soon —?"

"I think so — I don't know — I have a sort of hold. Here I am, you know; here I always make a point of being. . . ."

Both the Blacks treated their domestic affairs with frankness; they constituted me a domestic clearing house; I received confidences and was asked advice. As the inevitable day of parting loomed near, I grew to be the rock they both clung to, the link which strained to hold them; Valentine said that at last I was the only taste which remained to them in common. And the more they opened their hearts to me, the more my own ached — not with pity, but with envy. That they had ceased to love each other didn't matter; they at least knew what love for each other might mean; bathed in it they appeared for my sight.

All that spring and summer — I stayed on, for London couldn't seem to have enough of me — is associated in my mind with this appearance, at last sufficiently pervading. Outside of my work at the theater nothing else mattered to me; even that — my dancing — took for the time a secondary importance, — that is to say, I didn't think about it unless I was actually in the midst of it. And even then my thought of my friends intruded. I saw resemblances to Valentine — resemblances in various members of my chorus, which

brought me direct to a vision of her — and so to a vision of her mate. Certain parts of my dances came in my mind to be inseparable from little observant things which Penny had said about them. He was full of question and comment. He was lost on railroads.

It will be seen I myself didn't find him altogether bad. He was peculiar — he had a peculiar type of mind — for me, at least, his sins hadn't scarred him. I found in him other qualities.

He had a fondness for the bizarre which extreme conventions of dress and of manner tended to conceal; he was a free spirit in the leash of custom. He had, as a child has, an entirely separate outer and inner life. As he pursued his outward course, — saw to it his father's railroads pursued theirs, — inwardly he trod paths unknown to steam and steel, he hovered at brinks, he explored deathless caverns. In my dancing he found inspiration — it was closer to his inner being than anything else he had yet discovered in his outward: "It isn't merely seeing you dance - that isn't the best of it—it's thinking about it afterwards. times in the morning when I'm walking about down in the city, with cabs and busses and every sort of thing all around me, why, suddenly it will come to me — the music and the color and the movement — and I have to shake myself to be sure I'm in Cheapside instead of the Strand. It has very much the same effect upon me as watching Valentine brush her hair. . . ."

He could be more technical — he dealt at times with the art of the dance almost as Syms might have done. He once asked me why I didn't employ men as well as women — and then answered the question for himself:—

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A BIG HORSE TO RIDE

"I suppose," he said, "it wouldn't do. Men, frisking about, grinning sweetly into space — I believe in the spring male cranes dance for the edification of their lady-loves, but for us we've renounced the privilege of being alluring. The Latin races still go in for it to a certain extent, but for us — it's become a sort of fetish that we don't make ourselves attractive. We keep our faces smooth, of course, and our hands clean; we brush our hair — but it's distinctly understood we don't tie pink ribbons in it —"

"Conqueror's wreaths," I said.

"Ah — that's different!" He went back to his elucidation. "If we were satyrs now — if we could get back to the fine old spirit — hoofs, shaggy tails, pointed ears — but you'd have the authorities down on you as quickly as the English eye could wink. That's the funny part of it, ian't it?" He found it all a matter of precedent — the eye grew accustomed. Shock — surprise was in the very nature of the word. He spoke of the type of young woman whose professional assets were a rouge pot and a blond wig and very little else — at least she gave the spectator his money's worth pound for pound. . . .

My chorus interested him—personalities as well as art abstract. Together we discussed it—the problems presented—the time I had had picking my bacchanal types from the insipidities available to my purpose—my ultimate success. I had avoided the usual pink and white prettiness, had attained instead beauty of an individual and striking sort. "You know, they're not angels—your precious sixteen—" Penny thought it right that I should realize. I protested that I had never thought they were; in fact, I had been a little afraid of being myself outdone—of seem-

ing on the stage less devilish than they; but such was the power of mind, the potency of my own peculiar gift of portrayal — I was assured my fear was groundless. "But nevertheless," Penny said, "it does rather put it up to you."

I told him how we'd worked, Syms and I together, worked at the hanging of draperies and the painting of eyes, the poise of a dancing foot. "We are the creators, and they—the precious sixteen—are only a part of our creation; they are the subject ready to our molding hand—"

"You glory in them," said Penny; "with true artistic immorality you render up their wickedness —"

I thought if I had found a use for a hitherto destructive quality. . . .

Penny asked me why, if they were so bad, I didn't reform them. He suggested that I organise a sort of club. "Why not a Nature Cult — 'Ethics in Leopard Skins,' 'Paradise Regained through Paganism'? Or better yet," he said, "when you get back to, Washington Square, have them all to tea — it might show them a new and better way of life. Washington Square, you know, a bit outside their line, but nevertheless —"

I reminded him that I didn't live in Washington Square — Madison Avenue claimed the honor — he said it didn't really matter — and at any rate I could live there for that.

"For that -?"

"For the party."

I asked him if he would come and help me entertain them. He promised.

I visualize the whole preposterous occasion, the reformers and the reformed — these last looking with wonder at the bare spaces, the rather austere decorative scheme — for relief I should have to exhibit the parrots — and touching the simple draperies with furtive caressing little hands. I imagine the growing tenseness of the situation being broken by laughter and Penny Black in his preoccupation dropping the teacups whose destinations he would be intrusted to attain. Besides his charming presence, I should have for my guests' diversion a juggler taking rabbits out of hats, and the tea would be flanked by ices and cakes.

Penny sketched a headline in the next edition of the Crier:—

"CHARITABLE DANCER UPLIFTS THE STRUGGLING SHOW GIRL

Rose Carson has her Bacchanalian Chorus to Spend the Afternoon"

I offered him a position as my press agent.

"Ah — you see in it merely an advertisement!" He refused to discuss it further. And finally — "What would Valentine think? I'm afraid she'd regard it as a solecism. She draws, in those ways, a remarkably close line —"

We imagined her coming in and finding us in the midst; she would sit there for a moment and then leave. We imagined her pale and brooding, achieving the true elegance in dove-colored broadcloth and a very simple hat. The sixteen of them would be beflowered and befeathered, jangling with pendent trinkets.

I confessed I liked them best as they clustered about me in their leopard skins and garlands and peered out with slant roving eyes into the great dimness of the audience. For what they were apart from that they had themselves and an uncompromising world to thank. . . .

I recount all this that used to pass between Penny and myself — I bring it in as it were by the heels — not so much for any intrinsic importance as for the light it sheds on the sort of thing there was between us. I'm proving my exemption. It's because I've said so much and been so frank — I envied Valentine her husband — thought of him broke my sleep — nothing else mattered. All this was true — my peace was disturbed — and yet there was no vulgarity of flirtation. I couldn't have done that — I was Valentine's friend — and I didn't particularly want to do it. Flirtation wouldn't have suited the case at all. I was in a peculiar position; I received confidences from Valentine, things about her husband of a rather intimate sort; I was expected to give her my cool opinion. I received confidences from Penny about his wife. And the more I knew, the more I wanted to fling it at them both that I wasn't a suitable person for their trust — that I'd been starved of just the sort of thing they were so light about — it was like discussing the relative flavors of bones before a hungry dog. And I knew just as well as I knew that I was alive that the young man wouldn't have been in the least above any degree of flirtation I might sanction; he was there to my hand, and I might not touch.

XXIX. PARIS

Nor the least curious point in the whole situation was the fact of how little my abstinence was due to respect for the absent Simon. I had a reaction against Simon; anything I might do struck me, suddenly, as not any of his affair. That summer in London I couldn't realize him; it was almost as if I had forgotten him — or forgotten at least that I was his wife. Even his letters didn't convince me—it seemed to me they were written by another man. And at the last, as my time for going back to him drew close, I couldn't realize that. I didn't try to realize it. The situation was between Valentine and Penny and myself — so I wished it to remain — what I did with it, and what I didn't do, was our concern, not Simon's. I don't know why I felt it so, but that was how it was.

The Blacks were staying in London all summer; what they should do without me they neither of them knew — Valentine railed at fate — "When you go, what is there —?"

"There's Penny."

"Ah — Penny, Penny, Penny!" She had the effrontery to tell me that she wished she were in my place. "You, at the worst, are going back to a man who isn't Penny!"

"Why, at the worst?"

"Well — you're giving up your freedom, aren't you? You're going home. You have a husband who'll be meeting you at the pier." She realized it more than I did. On a certain date my season was to close, and on a certain date

I was to sail; it was definitely settled, every hour brought me nearer, and yet I say it was an event my imagination refused to compass. But she was hardly the person to talk of giving up freedom — to speak as if the marriage state, for a woman, quite lacked it. I reminded her that she was as free as air; that if any one in her household didn't have freedom it was Penny.

"You mean that I'm the boss of the ranch? Yes, I know it; I wish I wasn't — I do exactly as I please." Then she came out with the reiterated statement that for three years — nearer four, it was — she'd been good, she'd been an angel. Her goodness weighed her heavy. "I get to thinking about people — wondering. There's Captain Neville — at the end of a week I'd fly out of my skin with being bored, I know I should. . . . And yet . . ." And she had, with all that, the desire to do the right thing. After these talks she would ask me to repeat to Penny everything she'd said, to warn him — as if he needed warning.

Penny was helpless. He told me, frankly, that he shouldn't be surprised at anything; he asked me what I should do if I were he.

- "I'd lock her up and sit on her."
- "Ah you don't know Valentine!"
- "Yes, I do. Then I'd pack her trunks for her and buy her ticket and send her to the station."
 - "Rose," he said, "you're a woman of action."

I think we all of us sat about and waited for a crisis; even Valentine herself waited. I don't know what the incident was which finally precipitated the plunge.

It was August — still London — and I was on the eve of departure. Katie was packing under my direction — clear-

ing the parlor table of some knicknacks I valued — I was deciding just what I should take and just what I should leave; a trunk was pushed out in the middle of the floor, the curtains were down, folded upon a chair, the excelsior of decampment clung and scattered. A letter was brought into me fresh from the post; it was from Valentine; she wanted to tell me first — before Penny had the chance to — she had left him. She was through. I could think what I would. Penny found me with the news still in my hands.

"So you know?" he said.

"Yes, if you mean that." I gave him his wife's communication.

"It's what I mean — she's taken herself away, once for all, she says — the boy and the nurse and the night train."

"Where to —?"

He broke into a remarkably gay smile. "Where do ladies usually go by the night train — leaving their husbands—? Paris, of course. But she's always rottenly sick on the Channel."

I too could be gay. "Always? You speak as if she were in the habit of leaving you. And besides, ladies don't usually take their children and their nurses."

"I suppose not."

"Tell me — did she take any one besides the nurse and the boy?"

Her husband looked up. "She'll probably mee't them in Paris. But if you mean, was that why she left me? — why, you know very well it wasn't. She wanted to — that's why — any one she meets in Paris, I don't mean any one, but any one she expects to meet there, why, they'll reap the harvest."

"And what will you think of that?" I said.

"I shan't think."

"And what will you do?"

"That's what I don't know."

"Do you want her back?"

"Yes -- I'd like her back -- if I can get her."

"Would you take her back --?"

"Yes - I'd even take her back."

For the moment my friends' hold on me had been loosened. I had been in the midst of concerns which weren't theirs—business matters—my London farewell—packing. I didn't realize that I was leaving, and yet I was preoccupied with the actual detail of my departure. Their news had come to me at the one moment, perhaps, when it would affect me least. But now something in Penny's voice tore away the last veiling shred of my preoccupation. I found myself suddenly in the midst of the arena. The man's wife had gone and he wanted her back and he wanted me to help him—he'd come to me for help—and I found my impulse was not to help him.

"You see," he said, "I thought perhaps that you --"

"You want me to go after her? My dear Penny, how can I? I'm booked to sail on Monday."

"Can't you change your booking?"

"Why don't you go after her yourself?"

"I shall - but I thought you'd go with me."

"Together —?"

"Yes." His usual softness was stiffened — even spiritualized — by his emotion; he was paler than he generally was, and his eyes were wide as though he hadn't slept. He looked extraordinarily young and extraordinarily weary — his fatigue a part of his youth.

But he could still be brave; he smiled, again gayly, and put out his hands to me pleading. "Ah — if you love me, you'll go with me!"

"If I loved you, perhaps I might."

He questioned.

"If I loved you more, I mean; even if I loved you less. Don't you see?, you and I together — we're both too young and too good-looking — it wouldn't be respectable — "

Penny flushed through his paleness. "You think now I might take advantage of the situation—? What I might have done—but now—"

"You see, I'm not willing to sacrifice myself."

"Your reputation —?"

I didn't answer him, but it hadn't been what I'd meant. As I had said, if I had loved him more — or less — but the feeling I had for him wasn't deep enough or light enough for me to help him, or for me in helping him to trust myself. I told him I was sorry, but I couldn't do anything about his wife — I was busy, I was sailing; his domestic difficulties had come at a time when it was out of the question for me to arrange them. Not that in any case there would have been anything I could have done. I was as harsh as I knew how to be.

He listened to what I had to say, and then he brought it out direct. "Rose, I'm afraid of you."

"You're not half so much afraid of me as I am of myself! Don't you see?" I said.

"I see —"

There were things clear to us both; the world seemed full of them; we neither of us could have helped seeing — he left me without saying good-by, I was shaking as with an ague —

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things we both had seen, and looked from them to blackness...

For me was the voyage on Monday, and in a week Simon meeting me at the pier, even as Valentine had said — Simon greeting me and taking me up through the hot summer morning to where his house lay cool and beflowered for my coming. He had folded me in his arms on the dock, and he did so again in the more suitable privacy of Madison Avenue. "Rose, my little Rose, you're here —"

"Yes — and I've been away!"

He laughed a little dryly. "Never in spirit, I trust. I hear — I read — of the great Rose Carson — but I want her to remember that however great she is, she's mine. Does she understand that?" He held me, now at arm's length. "I thought of cabling that I was ill, merely for the pleasure of making you come. I was ill — because you weren't here. I want to look at you — to be sure."

He led me down to lunch, a sort of sacrificial feast; he had arranged to have the whole day free for me. I realized then how far away I had been — particularly in spirit. I realized it even as he gave himself up to my return.

I had never seen Simon Featherly so give himself to anything before. It was as if he knew that I had run risk of eluding his grasp, and I now let myself go limp to it and let him mistake my passivity for response. He wasn't afraid of me — why should he have been? — but every bravery of his stirred my week-old remembrance of the husband who wasn't mine. Penny Black — the way he held his head, the way he walked, the way he laughed — Penny, gravely discussing the limitations of the stage, saying bizarre things with the meekness of an under-curate — in moments of con-

fidence telling me exactly what he thought of almost everything. . . .

He had told me, from time to time, the simple history of And he could be simple — he could take what came and let it pass. He had told me of Valentine and of the unregenerate days before Valentine. It will be remembered I had seen him first with the marks of crime still fresh. But for the most part what came hadn't ended in direct punishment; it would have been better for him, so he thought, if it had. . . . His earlier youth must have been a continuous abyss. One sees him, grave and sleek, hardly visibly eager, greeting the unknown with hat in hand; and again, still sleek, unscathed, hardly disillusioned, fitting a key to a lock and resigning himself with a good grace to that remainder which might still be night. It was from this that Valentine had saved him. "And now —" he had said — it was the last thing I had heard him say, he having turned from me, and turning again in the doorway, I trembling — "And now, if Valentine has had enough of me — what then?" I remembered him as he was then, come to ask me for his wife, to ask my aid in getting her; and I, gratuitously, shamefully, smirching his guilelessness. I remembered the two of us face to face with possibilities and fears, trembling and flushed and parting.

There had been so little. Now, bent reed-like to Simon's reception of me, I had regrets. But, as I have said, it wasn't for Simon that there had been so little. In the watches of the night I meditated unmorally and looked at my husband sleeping. He stirred in his sleep, reached forth a hand to emptiness, turned, and settled. His presence made me see myself unsparingly. Valentine had the courage of her con-

victions, while I only allowed myself the easy indulgence of an imaginative wandering. I was neither good enough nor bad enough, vainly I searched my soul and lost the self-respect I had always taken too much for granted. Respect—there was too much of it. Respect for my husband's sleep prevented me from waking him and then and there confessing how I hated him. Daylight broke through the heavy curtained windows and the promise of the day's heat worked in through my hate which was cold. I clenched my hands and found them clenched and held; Simon had been roused by the light. "Rose," he said, "Rose—I tell you again that I'm glad you're here."

XXX. DEBTS

The world couldn't go on — and yet it did achieve that seemingly impossible task. We took a house, temporarily, near town — where I could rest from my labors and Simon could go back and forth. I — with Syms — perfected plans for a new production. I ran across my old love, Barney Grant. Since my marriage he and his uncle hadn't been on the best of terms — I tried to patch that up and had at least an appearance of success. We spoke of our mutual friends, the Blacks. I gave him no news of them, and he gave me the news that he had seen them recently, and together. Evidently Valentine had returned to her spouse quite without my guidance; and, soon after, this supposition was verified by a letter from her in which she made no mention of ever having left him. I digested this information as I might. As I say — the world went on. . . .

The years which followed have to be dealt with in the mass; I find it impossible to sort them out and divide their very similarities into any decent order.

There was one of financial depression — nineteen three, I think, it was — when my theater suffered rather less than other theaters, and Simon by some unexampled foresights didn't suffer at all. He bought antiques to great advantage, and the housemaids complained to me there were too many things to dust. We built a cottage in the country as we had planned, the very perfection of a cottage, a place where we could go for a day or a month, near enough to be

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accessible, far enough to be secluded, within sound and sight of the sea and with broad lawns spread to the sun. We had a revulsion against elaboration; we made our rooms plain and square, with broad white panels and vistas which the eye could follow unarrested; we placed black mahogany against The only really precious thing we had was a the white. Chinese hunting rug of scarlet and blue in the hall. Cassagryer came over from her beloved England and stayed with us; and that same year I went back with her, and she and I together — under the guidance of Syms — traveled in Russia. I had the honor of meeting Marius Petipa, the originator of the Russian School. I was invited to dance in the imperial opera house both in Moscow and St. Petersburg, a distinction I share with no other American, and had the support of the imperial ballet corps. Petipa praised me — qualifiedly.

There was genius, undoubtedly; originality — perhaps the greatest he had seen — but, after all, I was neither French nor Russian. If he had had the privilege of training me himself, the faults of my nationality might have been in a measure overcome — I had been allowed a too great freedom — independently I had worked out my salvation, for the which is no woman wholly fitted. For once Syms was humble before a higher than he, and Mrs. Cassagryer mentally — but nevertheless obviously — took notes.

Marius Petipa died last summer in the Crimea. He had a state funeral attended by a court chamberlain sent by the Czar. In this country they don't pay tributes of just that sort. If one dies young, there are flowers; but if one waits, as Petipa waited, flowers even may be denied the cast shell which is with a dancer the only thing that counts. Just be-

cause it counts so much its passing into disuse has a picturesqueness. There should be for our dead a beating of gongs and a wringing of hands, valediction not to the freed soul, but to the body that is danced out.

Not long ago I was present at the funeral of one of our She hadn't been great in life, but young and vital and with a small perfect beauty singularly mortal; death the very completeness of it — gave her the greatness she had lacked. The whole world seemed to mourn; menthe papers printed preposterous enumerations of them blocked the aisles of the little chapel and overflowed in great cues into the street. It was like the line formed before the box office on one of her first nights — and quite as She would never smile at them now with her hopeless. little white teeth, she would never sing in her high metallic voice which for all that had its charm, and most of all she would never point her satin-shod foot to the heaven of the first tier. When she danced she was grave, as though it took her effort; but her mastery of the technicalities of her simple steps had a certain finite grace, she was perfect, her achievements hardly needed the spaces of eternity. Her straight little back, all polished and powdered, her delicate brows, even the miniature brutality of her pout — it seemed to us who passed before her coffin that these things had more an earthly than a universal use. And then it came to me, my old belief, things can't die. Her brows, her back, even the short full ruffles of her skirts — she seemed to stand forth before me, much more real than the strange white image smothered beneath the coffin lid. It wasn't like that, surely, pale and stiff, that she would be remembered by the men who passed her now; those who, watching her, had wished the barrier of footlights away, and who night after night had derived a curious enjoyment from that ungranted wish.

But all this death . . . I don't know why I've dragged it in, as it were, by the heels. In those years of which I am trying to write no one had died or given thought to dying—there was too much else. I find it difficult to remember just how much less there was; time went quickly, this book doesn't pretend to be a daily journal.

But perhaps I've sufficiently brought it out, how London and Penny Black went into the background. For the time I more or less forgot. Valentine wrote to me as always. She seemed again content. I brought myself to receive her letters without emotion — almost without interest. tine — an old friend — her husband — an old friend also — the episode was settled for me. I brought myself to talk of them to Simon, in my zeal to do this I may have even violated confidences; we compared their domestic upheavals to our own harmony: "Our marriage rests on an utterly different basis. Mind," he said, "and the flesh never for its own sake alone. Beauty informed. Your hands, for instance — there are other hands as soft and white, even as strong, as yours; but for me yours are marked — they come alive — all your life and thought are in the turn of your thumb and the traceries of your palm. It's that I would reach, the ultimate, the heart's core. Never content with the mere heart itself . . . I feel with you I haven't that, you don't love me, you never have. I say — our marriage is on a different basis altogether."

"I've never been able to make out on what basis it is on..."
It will be seen that Simon worked hard for his ascendency.
He courted me after years of marriage as he never had done

in earlier days; perhaps I was more worth his pains, perhaps, not content with the heart — which he had not — neither was he satisfied to rest on the laurels he had gained. He wanted the ultimate — whatever he might consider that to be — my soul in strips spread out for his salting. I marveled at the vitality of the man — the unflagging interest; it gave me an exalted opinion of myself, not disagreeable; if he were great, as he was by every measure, his devotion put me as greater still. It was my pleasure to stoop to his whims that I might rise again refreshed by fuller knowledge of my power. It gave me pleasure, knowing his, to feel my own above it. Interest — there was that between us — even though at times, with me, an interest worn a little thin.

But through it all I think I filled my part in marriage with a rather scrupulous care. It's true I was away a good deal; but Simon didn't altogether object to that, his tastes didn't lie in the direction of domesticity, if I hadn't been away he might have become bored with me. And I made up for my departures by the care I took with my arrivals. Just because I was with my husband so comparatively little, because from that I never lost a certain strangeness in his presence, I kept for him all the amenities of speech and manner; I was never cross nor rude — nor perhaps wholly frank — I never broke my word or faith from the slightest to the greatest. I know he did a great deal for me; without his aid I shouldn't have attained as I have the topmost rung of the ladder his aid financial and artistic, and even the social side has counted. He educated and formed me, he did exactly what my father had said he would do, made a great lady of me set me apart and on high, gave me an angle at which to view myself. And I, being always fairly honest about my debts, paid them in this case to the full. In many ways I might have given false measure; but the best thing about my marriage was that I didn't, and my very faithfulness produced a sort of substitute for love.

It was the second summer of our cottage in the country that Valentine came and stayed with us. I have spoken of that visit before, spoken of her naps and her walks, her alternate recumbency and enterprise, her little boy. I hadn't seen her since London, but letters had bridged the gulf smoothed away any awkwardness of memory, and for her there was less awkwardness than for me — so when she asked if she might come to us it didn't seem a particularly strange request. She and her husband were at peace, a peace, however, which they thought it best not to strain; that was why she honored us, for business kept Penny in New York that summer, and large as New York was, it might not prove large enough for them both. I asked her if he would be down to see her, and she said she didn't think so — she was with me in order not to be with him, and yet not to be placed awkwardly and conspicuously alone. She put it frankly. besides, when she was with me it was a very sure sign she wasn't with any one less desirable, for she had friends in whose charge Penny never would have allowed her to be. So we harbored her, Simon and I, we sanctioned her, even the flirtation she carried on under our very eyes with our friend, Keith Wadley. Simon thought Wadley was making a fool of himself — I've always noticed that a man has little patience with the less admitted admirations of his friends, unless he himself happens to appreciate their object — I say, Simon thought Wadley's course ill advised, but it hardly came within the letter of our guardianship. What could you expect when you had with you a beautiful woman who didn't get on with her husband? Wouldn't she naturally create a stir among the men who came to the house, and if one of them were fortunate enough to find favor, however slight, why, wasn't he to be congratulated rather than blamed?

So it went.

I believe she saw Penny one day in town; she reported him as looking well but thin, living at his club, working hard — so he said — in the day, and she supposed poking about at all sorts of queer ways in the night. never required sleep and rest like other people, and now with no one to look after him he's probably worse than ever. don't think I see my duty — I don't at all — time enough for that when I really want him for himself. I didn't, you know, to-day — he wasn't any more to me than if I had never laid eyes on him before. . . ." She dismissed that side of their meeting and told me the news that my father and his had fresh cause of quarrel. My father had obtained possession of some property out West upon which the Blacks thought they had a claim — communications were passing which must surely keep the wires hot. I don't know if I've remembered to mention that at this time my father was attending to some affairs in Colorado. The land in question was further complicated by the state line between Colorado and Wyoming. Valentine's account of it was obviously inaccurate, but in his next letter my father told me more it was a beautiful quarrel. Valentine hoped it wouldn't make any difference between us, and we both agreed it couldn't. The whole situation moved Simon to impenetrable mirth. He warned our fair friend he thought my father would win. and she agreed with him that Mr. Black didn't have a chance in the world — "What's that — I heard it somewhere — no more chance than a celluloid dog chasing an asbestos cat through hell? Besides, Mr. Carson's so attractive — I haven't seen him since the wedding; but I remember him well then, and before, when Rose first came back from England — he ought to win. You see how disloyal I am to my father-in-law!"

"Ah — my dear lady — disloyal! It's not a pretty word,"
"If I knew a prettier I'd use it," said Valentine.

Thus was our dinner table afforded conversation. I can hardly imagine it that summer without both the talk and the presence of Valentine. We lived quietly — I found I had to after the strain of the rest of the year — and she provided just the necessary diverting touch. Beneath our roof she represented the world we had forsworn, the flesh we judged, and the devil we could cast out. She wasn't disloyal to us. All this was in the summer of nineteen four.

I hadn't realized till I write it down that I had been married nearly four years. I must have been myself nearly twenty-four years old — young enough, it might seem . . . "The truth is, youth — I want, who am old and know too much — I'd catch youth." — Ah, Simon Featherly had caught it, all I had, I thought — which the poet doesn't say. Four years, and once in that time — once only — the youth in me had come to revolt, briefly, as I have said. I had settled back, filling my part in marriage, judging fairly of the advantages and the powers of the man whose wife I was, recognizing the bigness of my mount, having by that a standard which might have spoiled me for lesser. And then came Valentine. I say I can hardly imagine that summer without her.

I can hardly imagine my whole life without her. Lacking her and the elements she introduced to it, it would have been as calm and as concentrated as the life of Syms — presented at least a surface as hard and as polished as anything produced by Simon. Valentine brought to me the element of chance — she might leave wreckage and she might bring joy. It didn't greatly matter, the one was sometimes indistinguishable from the other.

She had lost — or never had — many things which I had kept; but she was young, at twenty-seven she was in a way immature. She had left her husband and gone back to him; left him and returned again; she had been neither honest nor true as far as I could make out — for I didn't know whether she was always honest with me — and this very irresponsibility took the place with her of inexperience. I envied her, not only her husband but her lightness, I felt that I myself had missed a part of human experience by having within me a force — I was inclined at the moment to call it a weakness — which prevented my being myself as light as she. knew the gall of harness and the prick of spurs. paid one tremendous price — marriage — it was the only harness she had ever known, and she made light of it. Lightly she had taken it all — and for that, and in spite of that, I envied her. She had suffered the pains of motherhood, rebelliously, she told me, execrating the fate which made her woman. She had a son, whom in her own way she loved. I envied her for that.

"He's so round," she said, "you don't know whether he's coming or going — standing on his head or his heels. But his eyelashes are much too nice for a boy — I tell him he ought to give them to me. When I tell him that, he opens

his eyes so wide and they look so funny. He thinks I'm a fearful joke, he hasn't any more respect for me than I have for him; but how can you have respect for a person who's so pink and so solid? He wanted a plaid coat like his father's; I really thought he'd have to have it till I discovered for him that his coat was plaid too, only the plaid was so big you couldn't see it, it came, as it were, outside the picture. And what do you think he said? He said he'd never heard of anything being so big you couldn't see it. Now wasn't that remarkable? Oh, he's got a mind — where from the Lord knows!"

The little Ha'penny, or Pennington Black, 2d, as his mother addressed him in moments of dignity, shared with his family the distinction of my interested regard. His mother insisted I spoiled him because I brought him back toys whenever I went to town, and a toy automobile that he worked with his feet and honked about the place with from morning till night. But why shouldn't I spoil him a He was the only child I ever knew, and in his bathing suit — in spite of roundness — he was a sight to move gods to joy. He was surprisingly strong. Under my tuition he grew to be very clever on the horizontal bar in my gymnasium; he could chin himself five times — once for each year of his age — and I put him up a light-weight punching bag for which he showed immediate aptitude. Valentine assured me the prize ring wasn't his final goal; but though he had a mind, as it were by accident, he had been bred not so much for mind as for body, and I was merely continuing him in the direction of his start. He gave me full credit — I will say that for him.

I remember the day of his first fight. He came in torn

but triumphant and told me all about it. He had tasted the sweets of victorious battle and in the midst of victory gracefully acknowledged the source of his advantage. "And then," he said (he spoke without the usual childishnesses), "and then a chap comes up and says, 'Who taught you to fight, anyway?'—and I says, 'Mrs. Featherly taught me to fight.'" I warned him not to abuse his skill—I tried to instill the rudiments of honor and virtue. I grew accustomed to the strangeness of hearing the young voice and the young laughter, and then, when he went off for a visit to his grandmother, I grew accustomed again to the strangeness of not hearing it.

But apart from the merely personal aspect of the little Ha'penny, the great point of him was the obstacle he was to his mother's and father's final separation or divorce. He had been all along a bond, and now she wouldn't desert him, and Penny himself was proud of him. It was as if they both visualized their son in a case of that sort as being dragged, torn and bleeding, into the courts. They refused to sacrifice him—and also, passingly, they refused to sacrifice themselves, they were very well off as they were. "I suppose we either of us could get it," said Valentine, gayly,—speaking of divorce,—"but I don't see why we should. It's not as if we wanted to marry again—we've tried marrying—if I saw any one I felt I couldn't live without marrying, or if Penny felt the same way (I'd pull his hair for him if he did), why, it would be very different."

She confided to me once that she'd never known a great love—a grand passion—"I don't believe I ever shall—it's rather late."

I reassured her it was never too late, but she refused to be comforted. "Yes, it is. . . . I think the men I could love

are all dead. I don't know... I think they were kings and emperors and people like that — not the ones they have now; I've seen some of those, but the old ones who lived thousands of years ago. I read a poem which struck me as being awfully true—'Was it Alciphron once or Arisbe?' It went on — I don't remember — then

"'Thy lovers, when temples were built And the hair of the sacrifice braided And the blood of the sacrifice spilt,'—

I don't know who Alciphron was, and I shouldn't recognize Arisbe if I came face to face with him on Fifth Avenue — but it's what I mean — it somehow makes me feel I've missed what you call my sphere. I seem to get it more in Penny. . . . I see people all the time I'm terribly in love with, but that's different. Sometimes I feel I could hate every one I even so much as lay eyes on just because they're not my ideal. People aren't big enough for me — it's funny, because I'm not big myself, — I'm not great in any way, but I demand a lot. Now there's Simon — he's big, and I appreciate what a wonderful mind he has and how wonderful he is altogether; but for myself — well — he wouldn't do, I want something more. I don't really know what I do want — but let me tell you if I ever find it, why, I won't let it go!"

"Ah — you mustn't!"

We were sitting out on the south piazza, I remember, that looked towards the sea, and she smoothed her hair from the sea breeze before she repeated her assurance. "Believe me, I won't. It's what I feel — I mustn't."

"But if you find it — what you want — are you sure you'll know it then?"

"It's what I pray for. You didn't know I prayed, did you?"

XXXI. WONDER

Ir was towards the end, we were beginning to think of town; I had to go there so often to consult about my new production that remaining much longer out of it hardly seemed worth while, and Simon himself was becoming a little bored with the fifty miles of motor trip back and forth. attempt it every day, but I was away from him so much that he liked to be with me when he could, and it seemed to him he knew every inch of the road from New York to Mead-In fact, we had come to the line, or turning point, known to town dwellers, when suddenly the country turns stale before their eyes, when they have to leave it for a time in order to come back to its charms afresh. With us this point was reached sooner perhaps than with most people; Madison Avenue might not seem generally desirable at the end of August. To me, however, it held promise of the work I was anxious to settle to, which, having rested, I was ready for. Valentine was to stay on with us to the last and then visit her people in Montreal; beyond, she didn't know, she hadn't made up her mind. . . .

"It must be wonderful," she said, "to know so surely what you are going to do — you, with your future all planned — I never know — I don't think I could —"

She confessed herself a creature of impulse, and Simon attempted to explain to her how the practice of any form of art put a stop to all that. "You see, Rose knows years ahead—she has to know—she's working at things now which she

expects to produce at a date so distant you would be tired of waiting for it to arrive."

"Yes, but that's in her work — I mean in concerns apart of the work."

"Her other concerns have to conform."

Valentine admitted her concerns had nothing to conform to — but as for being tired of waiting, she knew all about it. If she really had something to wait for, she said, she might not be so tired. . . . Simon and I discussed her between ourselves. We neither of us could decide exactly what would be her salvation — it was possible she didn't require any. She was as the lilies of the field, said Simon. And he liked to have her about because she and I looked well together — we showed each other off — she more brilliant than I, striking a higher, gayer note, arrestingly lovely — and I with subtilties and beauties (I quote Simon) all my own. That was it — in each other's presence we both held our own. He searched a well-stocked memory and could think of no other women who wouldn't have been outshone by either one of us. He could say all this, thus frankly putting us as equals, and yet our guest left him cold — quite as cold as he left her.

He watched the convolutions of Keith Wadley and delivered the aphorism that the older a man got, the more dangerous he was to himself.

"Then you don't fear for Valentine?" I asked.

"Valentine —? What is there to fear?"

But Valentine finally wearied of the ministrations of Mr. Wadley. I don't know whether it was his years that wearied her, or his devotion, or his mere existence. Suddenly—peremptorily—she summoned her husband. I remember

her coming in from the garden, where she had gone after dinner to smoke a cigarette under the stars, and asking from the open doorway if she might telephone to New York. She had all the little thoughtful graces of an accustomed guest: "You're sure you don't mind—? I may have to try a lot of places—"

I gave her full liberty to try as many as she liked. I could scent climax.

As she stood there framing her simple request, herself framed by the summer's evening and the colonnade, she was dramatic as a woman freshly come from fear or struggle or passion. Her skirts were wet and draggled from the dew, which shone also on her hair and brought it low to her brow in little glistening tendrils; she was pale under her summer tan and the small mouth brilliant in contrast; her eyelashes glittered, whether with dew or tears, and the hand that held yet closer her close-clinging draperies showed in its tenseness the delicate blue tracery of its veins. I looked up at her and it came to me with a sense of waste that a little more and she might have been dramatic to some purpose.

But I turned from abstractions and asked her, very naturally, if anything had happened.

"I'm sending for Penny. You don't mind?" she said again over her shoulder as she went to the accomplishment of her purpose.

He came the next day. Simon brought him back with him in the car which at last thrust its great steel nose round the bend in the road and warned us shrilly of its approach. Valentine shot out one glance to be sure that Penny was there, and then veiled her eyes; she didn't raise them even as the men came up the steps, yet this moment — the moment

of arrival — was what she had been baldly waiting for all day. As it drew near she had placed herself just where she still remained, at the side of the piazza which faced the drive, and sat with no pretense of reading or talk, merely watching that bend in the road around which, as I say, the vehicle of her hope at last appeared. That coming, swift and powerful, so smooth that it needed the cry of the horn as alarm, seemed in a manner to have been the direct result of the intensity of her regard. The great machine was a genie responsive to the magic of her wish, unhallowed it was, I felt she had somehow called forth more than her slender hands could control.

But the explanation of all this is that I myself was overwrought. Valentine had communicated her mood to me; all day she had waited and finally I found myself waiting too. I didn't take it as she did — I didn't sit with my hands in my lap — but my attention was focused as hers was. I greeted Penny Black, I made a suitable reply to his appreciation of our kindness in letting him come, his hope that he wasn't intruding; and I turned from him to his wife, who now had risen, but made up for that acknowledgment by looking off as though the driveway might still have something to bring forth. She had the right to wait.

I found my jealousy in London had been a very pale emotion indeed. I wasn't jealous of Valentine's beauty, — fortunately I didn't have to be, I would have felt the same way towards the ugliest woman alive for the right and claim she had. That she had abused it didn't matter — nothing mattered now — I had waited longer than she, — all my life, it seemed. This was life — life itself; even my strength ebbing out — ebbing as it hadn't done since the days of

Barney Grant — not then — I had never felt as now. I remember the thought came to me that I was twenty-four, married, a dancer, — in short, a woman of experience and years — and there were certain emotions which I knew in their fullness now for the first time. It was for these I had kept myself so fresh. Again I went back to the days of Barney Grant, and then forward, I looked straight at a possibility of days greater than they. With my material eye I looked straight at Simon, who had happened to place himself within my vision; and who I could tell was reading my thought, which, nevertheless, hardly seemed to concern him.

I remember Penny, a little insufficient, as, in such a situation, any man would of necessity be. He looked well but thin, as Valentine had said, still grave and young, and I had time to note through my stress that he was embarrassed an embarrassment of riches, or what, I didn't know. He met his wife's eyes that at last rested on him, or rather took him in from top to toe, back and forth, — it was the first mark of recognition she had chosen to bestow. She had spoken to Simon, asked him some question about the new car, but for all she had said to Penny he might as well not have been there; her silence, however, was covered in the general flutter; we had tea, — I poured it with an unusual care, — and Penny drank whisky and soda — abstractedly, as though it might have been tea, and he wouldn't have known the difference. Valentine nibbled a cooky and smoothed between her fingers a cigarette she finally decided not to smoke; Simon drank his tea and told us about some box trees he had succeeded in procuring from an old woman who had a place on the other side of the bay — he hoped to transplant them in the spring. At eight we dined.

During my season of work that ceremony had to be dispensed with altogether, so in my holiday the whole house of Featherly did its best to show me how great was my loss. The butler — high priest of the feast — triumphed in a double impressiveness, the second man followed his lead, below stairs the cook exceeded himself. They made it plain, always, that they protested at the irregularities of my mode of life, and yet they were proud of me; they wouldn't have had me otherwise; they cut my photograph from the Sunday supplements and once a year did themselves the honor of marching up to the box office in the character of public. parlor maid explained to me how tickets I gave them didn't seem the same. Once I recognized the butler sitting in the second row, and he won my everlasting admiration by being the next day as imperturbable as ever; he served me my luncheon without so much as a flicker of an eyelash. to-night, the night in question, here we were, four of us, Valentine and Penny and Simon and I, — an even and suitable number; it was towards the end, irregularities loomed imminent — it all combined for an even added pomp. There was something a little special, surely, in the arrangement of the great purple asters, the polish of the vases which held them, the delicacy of the glass, the solidity of the silver. The menu, placed before Simon and myself, gave promise of a more than usual perfection; just because one ate lightly, there was no reason, Simon said, for eating badly. I couldn't make out that he ever did. He applied this maxim also to what he drank; to-night, I know, he had up the last remaining bottle of a particularly prized year of champagne — I don't know why he thought Penny Black worthy. . . .

Penny would have appreciated as much a less recondite

compliment, would have responded as charmingly to a less precious stimulation. Besides, he had for his pleasure the opposite vision of his wife — quite improbably lovely—and at his left myself, not wholly to be overlooked.

Again the greater burden of the talk devolved on Simon, as being in a manner the one less directly concerned with the more vital and unspoken aspects of the occasion. He entertained us with an explanation of the differences between Persian and Indian rugs, the study of rugs being his last and most absorbing hobby. "The designs in Indian carpets show a more naturalistic representation of nature — the plant forms are arranged in series — given as much as possible a framing. Therefore the Indian composition is clearer, the symmetry more obvious. The color scheme is on the whole lighter than the Persian. The rug industry is of much later date than in Persia — the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There were the imperial looms at Lahore, also Agra and Fathpur, the Town of Victory founded by Akbar Shah, who built there a palace for his wives —"

Penny listened and seemed to learn. His informer was called away to the telephone and after watching his retreat he turned to us, who remained, with a long stretching motion of hands and arms in a direction which seemed to compass us both in his embrace.

"Rugs, forsooth! A palace for his wives — can't you see them sitting in little rows, cross-legged like little Turks? Naturalistic as you please. All the plant forms of the Orient woven beneath them —" He smiled like a person looking over a wall at a scene in another garden. At Simon's return he asked for more. "Tell me more — tell me everything! What did they have in the palace besides wives and

rugs? I want to know it all. Didn't they have Rose to dance and Valentine to play the lute —?"

"I'm afraid not," said Simon, "in that you and I have the advantage."

Penny laughed. "I think it's rather gay, getting ahead of a chap like Akbar Shah. I hope his tortured soul gives us credit."

"You wouldn't add to its torture, surely, — you wouldn't have him beating at the gates of life to mend the error of his prematurity—?"

"Ah — you make me feel how lucky I am!"

Simon insisted that he himself was quite as lucky. Hadn't he had us both all summer — at least since July — wasn't our dancing and our lute playing the least of his delight in us? There was something called the bow of beauty. We possessed it. To a man who honored beauty as some men honor their gods, our mere still presences spelled wonder.

"That's it!" said Penny; "wonder." He again reached forward across the table. "And you're married to the one and I to the other."

Valentine turned to her host. "That's so there shall be no hard feeling between you." Simon took it dryly, yet admitted that such an arrangement insured against complications.

I remember all this now, as I listened to it then, as a background and setting for my own stress. I wondered if any one had ever felt for me as I now left for some one else. If they had I pitied them — pitied Simon the years I had made him wait for me — and now, curiously, Simon knew. I read his knowledge much as he read mine. I wondered what he'd do; it didn't make to me any particular difference,

I could depend on him to do the right thing. I had what I had had once before, a clairvoyant vision, based insufficiently; I knew, not only how things were, but how they would be. I looked at Simon, I felt I had better do so while I might; Penny I looked at and veiled my eyes as his wife had before veiled hers; I looked at myself, a new person spread forth for my sight, and last of all at Valentine—at the same time rising.

She got her banjo — she regretted it wasn't a lute — and strummed sympathetically in the dimness of the piazza. Hasn't the immortal Meredith something to say of the melody of love played upon a penny whistle? To me it might have been the music of the spheres. I was cold my warmth seemed all concentrated to my emotion — and sent for a wrap which when it arrived wasn't the one I had meant, but instead an embroidered cloak I had been experimenting with for a dance. It wasn't lined and its rough gold threads pricked my shoulders. I remember my sense of that as I remember the glow of Penny Black's cigar and the silhouette of his seated figure against the lighted oblong of a French window. Simon sat near, and the men communed sagely about questions of finance, softly too, not to disturb Valentine's playing; their talk was a sort of running accompaniment for it, an octave low:—

"They gave out their statement of their June earnings, but didn't include the earnings of the new subsidiary, thereby failing to show —" "— the rates decided by the commission as too high prevailed and after the special meeting —" "Were you there —?" "No, I had to go to Chicago —" — the Traffic Bureau filed a claim —" And then — plunk — plunk — the melody of love. I've made that clear enough.

Valentine took Penny down to the garden to show him the way to the swimming pool which in the morning he had promised to honor. "We'll turn on the lights," she said, "and bother the goldfish—"

"But the goldfish are in the fountain!"

"Of course they are." They went down the steps together, she a little in the lead. Simon went upstairs, I stayed where I was on the piazza. "You'll wait?" he had asked me, and receiving no reply hadn't himself waited further.

I was cold and drew my wrap close. I don't think I had any definite notion of why I continued to remain; my moment of clarity was quite over, my coldness at last mounting to numbness. I think I must have slept, sitting as I was in the stiff wicker chair. In my sleep it seemed to me I heard Valentine bidding me good night, and passing me, and the scrape of her gown on the flags. Then I was aware of some one moving about inside, closing the windows, drawing the curtains, arranging the lamps; I, seated in shadow, wasn't seen. I put off going in, I was cold — or chilled — but in the house I felt I should stifle; it already held too much, it needn't hold me — just yet, at least. Even the partial inclosure of the piazza shut me in. I rose and went out, again with no guiding idea except perhaps to free myself of the depression of a roof over my head.

It was a black night pierced by stars, and late, as lateness goes in the country; the houses of neighbors were blots of deeper shadow through the trees. My own house I circled, and at the side towards the sea I stopped and looked out, watching by its lights the slow progress of a ship. But ships are for day and not for night, white sails or smoke against a blue sky, and now the sky was black and the sea

lay dark beyond the breakwater at the end of the lawn. I turned and came back and went down to the garden; I could share its sunken shelter, and also — for I found myself lost to all shame or pride — feel in the path the late impress of the feet of him I loved. He would have walked its length up and down — I knew so well, like a young leopard in a cage — and then come to a rather sudden halt by the bench before the fountain and taken his wife in his arms. She meeting him kiss for kiss — I knew that too — smoothing the cropped head, following the firm curved cheek, closing his eyelids for the mere joy, so she had once told me, of opening them again — of knowing he was hers to do with as she pleased: "I think I know how blind men see" — and he, like a great stroked cat, coming to a passive acceptance of her pains. Then the coming back — I didn't miss that, hadn't Valentine bidden me good night? sheer gratuitous insolence — they would have come up the steps towards the warm glow and path of light shed by the house.

I passed straight on, intent with my vision of them. I made out the white line of the garden bench, curiously broken and shadowed at the end; but it took me a moment more to see that some one was sitting there before me. Speech froze in my throat, horror gripped me, my feet were planted, and yet by some second sense I knew who it was. As soon as I could, however, I asked.

I was answered by another question. "What are you doing here?"

"What are you? I thought you'd gone in!"

"Valentine's gone in — I thought I'd stay for a while — I was far too comfortable to move."

"I'm afraid I've disturbed you —" For Penny Black

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had risen and given me his seat and then himself sat down again beside me.

- "The goldfish," he said, "have all gone to sleep."
- "You didn't bother them?"
- "No. We had enough to do, bothering each other. We had a fight."
 - "What about?"
- "I can't make out. Valentine wanted to see me, she wanted to see me very much indeed and now that I'm here she's angry at me for not being exactly as she had thought I would be. I don't know what's the matter with me, I'm sure. She says I've lost it, the attraction I had for her. She'll leave me, I suppose, but she's left me so many times it hardly counts."
 - "I pictured you as making love —"
- "Oh my dear we have! But she finds that it no longer appeals to her for that, I say, she should be angry at herself!"
 - "She thinks it your fault, not hers?"
 - "I do my best," said Penny, modestly.
- "You do your best but, tell me, you do it not of your own free will you don't love her, and want to love her? She's a very beautiful woman, a woman of whom any man might be proud, and you you both together —"
 - "Six years," said Penny; "isn't that enough?"
 - "People are married for more than six years."
- "I suppose they are; but knowing Valentine and knowing me, can't you see —?"
- "Ah I see too much!" I don't know if it was for still a clearer sight that I suddenly, with a press of my thumb, flooded the fountain in glory. I got it, at any rate, in the clear

look I had at Penny—I saw him as I never had done, in a sense coldly; I saw and judged him; his looks, the very soul of the man was stripped for my inspired perception. In that moment I saw him as the high gods might see mortals—his weaknesses, the many ways in which he fell short of the mark of perfection, the cherubic quality mixed with sophistication as you sometimes find it in a woman, the light almost spiritual grace veiling and softening the brute. It was more than life, it was reality; and by the power of it—without illusion, almost without imagination—I knew the passion of love.

He pressed where I had and again we were in darkness. "Do you want every one to know we're here—?"

"Why not?"

"Why not indeed—?" He took my hand, then my other hand, and finally both together caught in one of his. "It doesn't matter, why not, but that's so you won't do it again!" He was a little breathless, as though his courage took his strength. "Rose—" he said, "Rose—" With his free hand he drew me close, my face to his, and I leaned away from him and felt across my shoulders the binding of his arm.

How long we sat so I haven't any adequate idea. It may have been five minutes or half an hour, it may have been less or more. I was silent because I had nothing to say, and he also — perhaps for the same reason; thoughts came too swift for remembrance. As in dreams a whole dream will be done in a second of the clock, so it seemed to me then that everything that I had ever thought or done or said or been came to me and passed, and, once the procession through, came again, in turn, countlessly. One consciousness

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was occupied in such wise, another with the mere sense I had of being held. . . . We rose and embraced again, and quietly made our way up to the house, stepping along the grass by the side of the path. In the hall upstairs we parted, reading each other's eyes, and Penny Black telling me in an ordinarily conversational tone that I would be lucky not to catch cold, falling asleep on the piazza. It struck me then how skilled he was in covering the mark of his trespass how his experience must match his skill. If it hadn't been that in coming up the bank by the steps I had slipped in the dew and left a grass stain on the edge of my cloak I might have been myself deceived. I remembered what Valentine had once said to me about not believing — she, too, had found need of a tangible mark of remembrance. hadn't understood at the time of our talk, - merely taken it on faith, — but now I felt that in my own less perfect way I understood not only that, but much which had hitherto been dark to me. Humanity was close — Valentine herself — I was filled with the wonder of it.

XXXII. TALKING

Wonder didn't stop there. I found myself, after all that had gone forth, looking at Valentine with a remarkably straight eye; meeting her, not in shame, but rather as one meets one's peers, proudly. If she were wise, I was wise too; if she were familiar among Elysian fields, I too knew their ways — I, Rose Carson, whom she had credited with coldness. In the afternoon I could discover I loved and at night meet my love under the stars clandestinely. "See," I might have told her, "returning I slipped in the dew — here a stain — he caught my hands and raised me, laughing low. 'Sweeter,' I said, 'the little laugh of love —' I too can quote your poet!—"

I might have had a word for Simon: "And you, Simon, I've been a true wife to you; I still am so by every law except of spirit. What have you to say? Senses and forces I never knew with you — you, my husband — a love you never taught me, have come to me now. The man I don't respect, I don't admire; I admit you the greater by every measure; yet this flesh you so despise — ah, you can afford to despise it, possessing it as you do in me, your wife — for me he has that. It's what I've never had in the full; you'll admit it, surely, a part of the birthright of life? But I didn't know, I took you — what more, you say, might I have taken? Never once, in the four years of our marriage, have I been glad of your caresses — I've accepted, I've

found at times peace — a certain quality of speculation — it's not more I want from you — less from you — more from me. I've had so much from you already, don't think me ungrateful, but I've paid, haven't I? Can't I go now? And if disaster finds me out I shall at least have peace to look back on, and for a time — we trust it not to prove too short — I shall have the thing I take instead of peace."

I might have talked to him like that, but if I thought I'd have the chance I reckoned without my host. For Simon chose to ignore my transgression, or rather, accepted it in its letter, leaving aside the spirit of its intent. He knew all there was to know; he'd been up that night when I came in, and undeceived by Penny's rendering; questioning mutely he found his answer, and still regarded his possession com-His composure was terrible; he kept it up even after the separate departures of the Blacks, our own preparations for town, and settling at last in Madison Avenue. Valentine went to Montreal, Penny stayed in New York, of course, and him I continued to see. I was forced to take my husband's silence as acquiescence, and therefore could find no reason why I shouldn't. It would have been too much or too little to expect that we should have ended at the garden bench.

For Penny we might have ended there. I don't flatter myself that at first he had as I did a premonition for a future; love hadn't come to him freshly after years of peace, he was less eager for it than I. Not in what he said, nor in his promptness to attend me, the way in which he seemed to hold himself in readiness for my commands; but at the first he didn't really care. It was my task to make his caring a match for mine. I think he'd had too much of

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love, he was tired and a little afraid, he had no wish to get himself into complications unreckoned. He was like an animal that has been maltreated, looking for danger; it was for me to calm him, let him guess rather than see my passion, set myself apart and abstract, more than ever the little Rose, the decorative figure of antiquity, painted, it was Simon who had said, on the wall of a king's tomb — under the circumstances too apt a metaphor. . . .

And one asks, where — all this time — were morals, my famous morality of intellect, kept from the first so clear? Up to a certain point — or beyond it — there are no morals; or at least I found myself curiously without them, though I hope I've made it plain that essentially they hadn't been infringed. The whole question didn't seem to me a question of morals at all. It wasn't for them I wanted to have it out with Simon, but rather to lend what dignity was possible to a situation not rich in that vein. I wanted to have it out and then leave; go perhaps to Washington Square by myself, and to a freedom which I nevertheless didn't intend to abuse. But in December I was booked to go on the road and in the spring London - Washington Square would be highly dramatic, highly effective, but as I thought it over hardly practical. One imagines departure as such a simple thing. The night train — as Valentine the hasty packing of a bag, tears perhaps — a few easy to shed — a final clasp, a word of parting; I mention these in an order opposite to their coming. But in reality it's not so simple — in my reality it was not. I couldn't go, and what was there to explain? I found that I still owed Simon something — what I would have owed to any one — not to disgrace him publicly; and leaving his house, in which there was obviously more than room for me — which was all ordered for my occupation — leaving, I say, for Washington Square, closed and dusty, — it let the public too much into one's confidence. The stress of it showed too great.

It could be done better than that. In December I would leave in the natural course and then not return; I would slip into the change instead of crashing through it. . . . So I brooded and meanwhile paid Simon this last respect. I'd paid him so much already — but what mattered a little more or less? — and as I've said, this leaving isn't so easy as people like Valentine make it out.

We had our interview. It finally came, unheralded and unsung; I found my courage gathered to a point, and Simon having lately come in, I invaded his dressing room. I remember him standing before the cheval glass, his derby hat on and incongruously his coat off; the image he surveyed reflected this as other peculiarities—even his effect, though in such wise marred, of being a fine figure of a man. I made sure we were alone, then went to my doom before my courage ebbed: "You know, Simon, when I go, on the 1st, I go for good!"

It was the image, not he, who met me. "Better for good than evil!"

"You'd have the right to think it would be for both. I mean, you know, that I shan't return — ever."

Still the image — "It isn't news." The image and I communed.

"I know it isn't."

At last Simon Featherly turned. "That's what you think now. By spring perhaps you'll have changed your mind. But the only wonder is that you haven't come to a conclu-

sion of this sort long before, I've been expecting it for years. I think I've done well."

"You mean to hold me for so long?"

"Oh—it's been my luck, I suppose, rather than my skill." And again—"But tell me, Rose, you really love this young man? To you he represents the farthest point of your heart's desire—you really want him—to be with him, to have him—?"

"I've never wanted anything before!"

Here I was disbelieved. That was it all through, a sort of disbelief I felt that Simon had, at the same time that he seemed to acquiesce altogether too cheerfully. I had scaled the heights and depths of tragedy, nobility, abandonment—and now I was brought safe to the level plains of comedy. Yet I couldn't say he didn't take me seriously, or that in his soul of souls he didn't bleed. It would have been natural, it would have been fit, if he had shown me his wounds. He asked me what Penny was prepared to do.

- "Prepared to do —?"
- "Yes is he going to marry you?"
- "How can he? He's married to Valentine."
- "It strikes me you're making a good deal of a sacrifice. I hope he appreciates it."
 - "Oh I'm not leaving you for him."
 - "Who are you leaving me for?"
- "I shall go and live quietly by myself in Washington Square."
 - "What of the young man?"
 - "He can come and see me there."
 - "Why can't he come and see you here?"
 - "Isn't that just what he's been doing?"

- "Yes but why can't he go on? Doesn't he like the neighborhood?"
 - "You can't like it."
 - "The neighborhood?"
 - "No his coming to see me."
- "I don't like it particularly, but I've found a number of things in this world I don't like. Here I can keep an eye on you, and perhaps you'll recover."
- "You think I'll recover and stay with you altogether no harm done? You're willing to put up with Penny Black why is it, because you care so much?"

Simon was consciously stupid. "For him?"

I turned away. "You're hopeless."

"Well — it doesn't matter what I am so long as you're leaving me. . . ."

This talk was only the first of many. If before Penny Black was a subject we'd both been silent about, now we discussed nothing else. We returned to the attack again and again, often exactly where we'd last left off, stopping one day quite in the middle of a sentence and going on the next as if there had been no interval of dancing and finance. We talked coldly, as if we were weighing the merits of a question which didn't directly concern us; the personal element was all an undercurrent, sometimes of anger or of pathos, or again, on my side, a curious triumph that the great Simon had failed where a lesser man had won. It seemed in a sense a triumph for me after four years of being Simon's wife. As for him he chose to ignore this aspect and endeavored to point out what the future might bring forth:—

"You'll tire of him just as you tired of me — and then what?"

"I never have tired of you!"

"What will you do, I say? There'll be some one else, I suppose, and then some one else—an ever widening circle. You mustn't begin on that!"

He seemed to have about these matters very definite and preconceived ideas, gained I don't know from what sources. He endeavored to make me see how things would end; in ways I was very young, he said, and didn't understand. . . . I was of too fine a fiber to be smirched. Living by myself in Washington Square, forsooth! As soon as I did that I'd have the whole world of men after me in full cry — a hungry baying pack. The vision he conjured wasn't pretty. it was really he who didn't understand; his ideas were all wrong. If I ever tired, or for any other cause Penny and I came to the end, my whole memory would be colored golden. I would want nothing to confuse it. Besides, I wouldn't be idle, I'd have my work — that would fill every need and thought. But now while I still was young I wanted love. and I wanted it honorably and openly — I had no wish to deceive.

"You call it honorably — Valentine's husband?"

"She has no claim."

"She's your friend."

"She still is. Don't you see — she's through? If I can pocket my pride and stoop to pick up what she has discarded, why, that's my own affair."

"If you did that I don't think she'd think you were her friend — no woman would."

"It makes no difference. . . ."

Again we gathered up the thread:—

"You don't care what Valentine thinks?"

- "Not now no."
- "You're lost to everything except your love?"
- "No, Simon, if I were I shouldn't bother you with it. I'd slip away, thrusting a note in your mirror."

"That wouldn't bother me in the least! A woman who did that wouldn't be worth keeping." As it was he felt he had to justify himself for letting me go as easily as he seemed to be.

"Some men," he said, "would think they were within their rights in making far more of a disturbance — they would try to save you against yourself. But somehow I trust you — it seems a curious thing for me to do at this juncture. You know, Rose, I know you better than you know yourself. . . ." That was his attitude from the first - he thought I should come back to him - he thought, when it came to the point, I would never leave him. if I did leave him, it wasn't for him to cry out; and if I didn't come back to him, nothing was to be mended by weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. He had a calm and an ease which shamed the way most men would have taken it. It wasn't that he held me less precious than most men hold their wives, it wasn't that he possessed me less, but merely that being a peculiar person he took a peculiar view. And I think he depended upon me not to dishonor him too much. As he said, he trusted me. He talked of the lurking dangers of Washington Square, but deep in his heart he trusted me to face them.

And all this time I saw Penny daily; Simon saw him too, and greeted him without a quiver to show his knowledge. He ceased to ask him to dinner — there was something deep and subtle about eating one's salt; but tea or a shake of

the hand was another matter so long as a blow in the face wasn't needed for honor. I evaded Penny's questions as to how much Simon knew; that was a matter between Simon and myself, I wished to keep it so. Penny would ask if Simon didn't think it queer, his coming to the house so much, and I would ease his fears—"Simon's in the habit of having people come to the house—"

"But not so all the time — if I could see you without that —"

"You do, nearly every night, at the theater."

"Ah — so does the rest of the world!"

"You have my photograph."

"A privilege shared by any one willing to expend seventyfive cents — I believe three for a dollar and a half —"

"Well," I said, "how would you like to see me? I'm rather well known, we couldn't meet each other on street corners."

Penny thought for a space before committing himself. "Haven't you a house you used to live in?"

"Yes — and I may live in it yet!"

He came over to where I was sitting in the corner of the big, much-upholstered lounge — the sort of lounge no inner sitting room was considered complete without — he came over to me. "Angel," he said, "angel . . ."

Penny wasn't the only one to compliment me. Simon himself professed his admiration. He told me that never had I been so handsome. "Love agrees with you—" He brought it out one night at supper. He had appeared unexpectedly at the theater and insisted on taking me out for that meal into the great world; there was no reason, of course, why he and I shouldn't appear in public together.

in fact he made rather a point of it as if in contrast to the comparative seclusion necessary elsewhere. "Besides," he said, "when I'm feeding you boullion at Sherry's I know just where you are."

But to-night he had other more important things to say. He told me he had made over to me his share in the stock of the Chorean Theater. I was appalled and asked him to explain.

"Why, it's very simple. I've turned over to you all my shares. So, with what you already had, you practically own the thing — the other stockholders are unimportant."

"But why —?"

"Well, I thought that in this 'leaving me' plan of yours you might feel embarrassed at having me own so much of the floor you danced on. Call it a premature Christmas present — as it's the last you'll let me give you, it might as well be handsome."

I was appalled, overwhelmed, and at last wholly puzzled. "You're far too generous."

We sat there, puzzling out the mainsprings of each other's acts. I was reminded of the time we had had tea together years before. A good deal had happened since then, of one sort and another — and still we were at Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street, and still we heard the buzzing undertone of waiters, and still we took each other quite stripped of the trappings of the great, and those trappings were rather more conspicuous than ever. It came to me — he wasn't generous in the least. I had paid my debts, and he was forcing me to new ones, setting ahead the time when I could honestly feel free. Making his stock over to me didn't make it mine, but placed me under everlasting obligation. I held my peace,

thanked him less effusively than I might, suffered him to remind me that I hadn't left him yet, and remembered it had been once said of him that he wasn't a Christian. Neither was he a Jew, but he might have had a certain affinity with the haunting soul of Akbar Shalı, with his wives and his rugs.

There were certain legal forms to be gone through with, papers signed, and I found myself, as he had said, the chief owner of the Chorean Theater. Simon, I could see, was surprised at my calm acceptance, he had expected hesitation and a profusion of gratitude at the last. But he turned even my placidity into account, telling Keith Wadley that it was a pleasure to do anything for a woman like Rose, who accepted it as her due and didn't bother you with thanks — if women knew how men hated them!

"Men —?"

"No — thanks — palavering."

I was calm because I was busy. Simon brought me the early news that some of the Chorean stock was on the market.

"I suppose now that you've sold out, the other stockholders are afraid."

"I suppose that's it."

It took him several days to discover that more stock was being sold than the other stockholders had ever possessed. At last a syndicate bought it in bulk. I deposited checks at Simon's bank — he found himself richer than he had thought. It didn't console him. "So you wouldn't accept my gift, after all?"

"No, I wouldn't accept your gift."

"But what will you do? You don't own any theater at all."

"Oh, I'll do; I still have money of my own. Syms and I

may go in together; failing that, there are plenty of managers who would take me on."

He believed then I was leaving him; but he couldn't believe it was for Penny Black. In a moment of anger he called him a little whippersnapper, though he was usually less racily human in his idiom. He faced me, a man of iron — I went off to my tour.

XXXIII. SPREAD EAGLE

SUDDENLY I was free. I woke to my freedom one morning on the train speeding west. The sunlight gleamed on the brass rail at the foot of the bed; through the window — frostcovered — a swirl of white showed rushing, gleaming landscape; outside my compartment I heard the cheerful clink of metal and crockery as the steward prepared breakfast; I caught sight of the broad white edge of Katie's apron fluttering out through the bathroom's open door - she was concocting a mixture which was destined to make me very beautiful. I lay there, taking a certain sleepy pleasure in these various assurances for my welfare — for the sunlight seemed part of that, and the rushing white and the cool, pleasant air neither too much of it nor too little; in fact, everything my senses gathered seemed to make its purpose mine. I reflected egotistically, as one who has slept well, and settled more softly to my pillows. I stretched, bracing my muscles and letting them flex again. It will be seen that my waking concern was with matters which hardly touched the realm of intellect at all.

And then — suddenly — I was possessed of an idea. I was free. I have heard people who have been through an operation for the removal of some troublesome organ say that on coming from the ether they felt curiously light, as if a weight had been removed, a weight mental and physical, as if sharp cords which had bound them had been severed. So

I.... Filled with an utter lightness, I was; as if I had been dragging a load unawares, and now that my traces were cut, had a foretaste of freeedom. I had an understanding I never had had before of the meaning of free will. It was one of the times in my life when I can say, looking back, that I had a complete consciousness of happiness. It wasn't contentment or well-being or interest or absorption or excitement, but apart from any of these. I say, I knew happiness.

And perhaps the most curious part of it all was that Penny Black wasn't in my happiness the colossal, looming figure. He was there, he took his place in the broad free landscape of my future; he — as Valentine — would play the lute, his music would refresh my ears weary from the strain of listening to greater chords, refresh me, and play me on to glories. Simon and I had been no fitting mates, too much alike — I had said it once — too much alike for marriage, two clashing egos, both at times making pretense of subjection — the great king, the little Rose; the queen, the slave. But now I was through with that, I had taken what there was for me and paid and gone on; my lover waited for me and work and life and liberty. I place him first and the thing he brought me last; I could have loved him for this gift of his, even if he himself hadn't been so worth my passion.

During these first days I was like a child learning to walk. I made tentative steps, I found I could stand alone without the support of table-leg or chair; what I had done daily I now did with a new inflection, simply ordinary acts now took on a freshness, what I did had nothing to do with any one but me, I belonged to myself. I considered thus that my value was enhanced, which prevented my making the usual ill uses of my freedom; and it would have been so, I thought, to have

rushed into my liberator's arms; he was there, he could wait. That side of my problem I regarded distantly. When the right time came he might take me and if it pleased him call me his; it was to be remembered he still had a wife who was my friend even as Simon had said. She had renounced her right in him and left him; but I had been straight with Simon and I intended to be straight with her, or, rather, I seemed to have got into a sort of habit of straightness difficult to break. It wasn't what she thought that mattered, I wasn't being straight with her on account of that, but what I thought myself. When the time came I would face her squarely -"Look — here's a man you've ceased to care about — he's nothing to you, everything to me — with your permission I take him. And if I'm willing so to do, as it were after you, why isn't this willingness on my part in itself a right? It isn't for you to object." There would be neither defiance nor shame.

Yet I am perfectly well aware that to many people it would seem the grossest immorality. Taking a friend's husband isn't any the less vile for asking permission for the crime. It wouldn't weigh that the friend doesn't want him and that one knows one's self a better match for him than she.

Valentine and Penny Black had been as mates the ideal sculptured lovers; one thought with them — if one thought at all — of the composition by Rodin, or certain representations of the gods, clasped in the marble for all time. In marble it was well enough; in flesh and blood the thing was hardly eternal — they hadn't found it so, at least; and Penny Black and I, less sculptured, more various, might be in the living flesh a greater success. It might be worth divorce and mar-

riage. Though I had few prejudices, it was best, I thought, to have one's redecisions made legal. . . . It wouldn't be Penny's idea, at least not at first. He would think it useless to bother Valentine or Simon or any one else — he and I loved each other, wasn't that enough? So often people didn't love each other — not really — we did and better thank heaven for it. We could send our thanks in little vapors from our lips like the souls of the dying.

I remember that my plans and thoughts of the future were a background for my very present sense of being free. I would be occupied at the theater and elsewhere — go along with my occupations much as I always had—and suddenly be brought up sharp by a flooding realization of my state. Perhaps something would remind me of Simon — Syms admired him and was in the habit of citing him; for an instant I would think of him as though we still were one, and then my thought would leap and gasp as it came to me that I had left him. I had no curiosity about him, I didn't speculate at all upon the effect of my departure — or if I did, it was merely to feel sure that he would take it as though I were coming back on my way to London and again in the summer, as though in fact I hadn't left him any more finally than the exigencies of my profession always made necessary. He wasn't, as I say, the sort to rend And I was either too modest or too the air with his shricks. hard to feel any pity.

Though I seem to have done nothing but contemplate myself and my new problem, I really spent less time upon it than would most women. I had less time to spend. The fact that I made an important decision wasn't the only one in my world, it brought in its train many other decisions which had to be met without delay. The major

premise ran danger at moments of being thrust to the back-Simon had seen the difficulties better than I. was all very well, selling my theater, but that was only a begin-Syms was still my official manager, as he had been for years past; we had backed him at the time of the break with Daniells and placed him on a level with other managers. was protected by what is known to the public as the theatrical trust — it's not my place here to give an account of that. He was protected and so in turn could protect me; this happy arrangement still continued, and luckily the current production was proving profitable. But I had to look forward, and found that dancing wasn't only a matter of art. **Fortunately** I still had money, my own original income left me by my grandinother and money I had made and invested from time to time on Simon's advice, my share of the stock had brought something — all together some people might have called me a rich woman as riches and as women went. . . .

Beyond the thing known to economists as the living wage, I think that money is wholly a matter of comparison and of custom and of standards. I had been in the habit of spending considerable sums of it — more than I now had — therefore I was poor. In the days of Daniells I hadn't had the risks of my productions and had been paid a large salary which came to me without question of profit or loss; in the days that followed I was Simon's wife. If he had taught me how to be a great lady, it was nowfor me to teach myself how not to be one. I might have signed with one of the big managers, Daniells perhaps or another, but that would have been to confess myself defeated. Instead I went on as I was, cutting my expenses where I might. For one thing I gave up my private car, and received an unexpected telegram of condolence from

Simon—I don't know how he knew. I telegraphed back that I hoped he didn't think I was riding in the day coach, and again from him word that when I came to that there might be hope for him. We never wrote. Penny and I kept up a great deal of correspondence—partly, I think, as a substitute for the nearer clasp and partly to prove to each other we hadn't forgotten.

With him his letters constituted a sort of alibi — "Here I am, at the club, writing to you — here I am, thinking only of you, wasting my emotion on ink and paper, straining my eyes beneath shaded lights, turning my back on the lights of the town and all the town holds. I, who have only to raise my hand and have the town at my feet — but without you, without you I can only sit here and wish I were not without you —" And I to him — more naïve through the pen than ever I was, lacking its protection — "What is it you say — your emotion, your eyes, your hands, even your feet and the back you turn? I wish you were here. I've come straight from the theater to write to you. I haven't had my supper, it's waiting for me — one place set."

As I say, a background of lute playing.

It cheered me on; it was the song of my freedom. It had almost the effect of starting me afresh. My years of marriage fell away and left me a girl at the beginning; I remembered Shoreham and Barney Grant; I went back of that to Barrington and Valentine — a little girl — coming out of her house and calling to me in the hour of my need. I had escaped committing murder and she called me to her and told me she knew all about it, her brother and myself, the robbers' cave, Lucy Sykes. She had hired Lucy Sykes to spy on us. She consoled me for her brother's loss by herself filling the

breach — she made paper dolls dressed as dancers. Under the spell of my memory of her then, I now wrote to her and told her that I had left my husband. She answered me strangely, as I hadn't mentioned hers. A letter, full of the usual feminine chatter, and then at the end — "How is Penny?" I seemed to be surrounded by people who knew more than could reach them by the usual channels of news.

Even my father, who came to Denver to see me, had heard rumors. I hadn't told him by letter, preferring to see him first, and he too had waited to have me confirm the report by word of mouth. He hadn't, however, heard of Penny, and there were excellent reasons why he shouldn't; I said nothing, and therefore to him my separation lacked motive or at least immediate incentive. He should have been glad, accepted it without question, — my marriage had in the first place been not of his choosing; but instead he questioned greatly, wasn't glad at all, wanted to know what I'd been thinking of — or who — and hoped that I'd recover from my folly. I remember him in a very Western hat whose sweep and texture sufficiently showed that he had forsworn the more metropolitan graces and conventions. His mental habit seemed also broad and rough, he asked, quite as if I might have answered yes, whether Simon had treated me badly.

"Badly —?"

"Yes. There are only two reasons why women leave their husbands: one is because they get badly treated, and the other is for another man. But you're not that sort — are you?"

"No, I don't think I am." It was the nearest we came to question and denial of Penny. We spoke of him, but only in connection with his father and the quarrel about the land.

The Blacks weren't winning and so their enemy had no bitterness, but rather the magnanimity of the victor.

"Black's all very well—" he spoke of the senior—"I've nothing against him. It's merely that he's quick and he tries to be too quick. I wouldn't say he wasn't honest. But once he's started he hasn't stamina enough to stay in the game. Stamina—that's it!" My father looked as if it was.

I found him as Jovian as ever, the ambrosial beard, the flaming eyes, - I believe I've called his beard flaming also, but beard or eyes it doesn't matter, — the great rolling laugh; and swarthy as he was from sun and wind, his lungs breathed deep with the high pure air, he was younger than he'd been ten years before. The years leave their mark, of course, but why should it necessarily be one of age? My father, having passed some half a century in its pursuit — albeit unconsciously — had at last found his place in the great book. Ten years before he hadn't. He had been a beast in a cage, snarling, pacing its length, seizing what meat he could. I think I have said he was possessed of forces whose usefulness the modern world confused; he didn't take kindly to restraint; space he needed — in a waste of space he didn't so waste himself. In this newer, brighter world whose civilization hadn't, as it were, yet sunk in, he too was free; he didn't snarl, or confuse the light of the Café Marin with the light of the sun. I'm not a believer in the originality of sin; beasts in their jungles are probably gentle animals enough, or I don't mean by all this that my father had turned saint, I saw no evidence of that and the only evidence I would have believed would have been an open grave and a coffin even then a doubt. One imagined him still a man of capabilities — running quite gloriously amuck; but on the whole he was content to walk quiet.

"You know, Rosie," he confided it to me apropos of the failure of marriage — mine especially — "all this business about men and women isn't the only thing in the world."

"Who said it was?"

"Well, here are you and I, both made a botch of it and yet we manage to worry along. Of course I don't compare us. I couldn't. . . . And yet — you know, I sometimes feel I could be just as happy if there weren't any women — if they didn't exist at all. Sometimes I get out there with my work, planning and calculating, working things out in my mind — I can almost feel my mind running smooth. Now women haven't anything to do with that. If they didn't exist, I'd have so much more time, I could run just so much smoother; it's knowing they exist — I begin to think I'm missing something. That fellow was right."

"Who --?"

"The late lamented Simon. He had a way of putting things. He and I used to talk, you know, times when you were away and we'd both be a bit lonely. He'd come round or I'd come round and we'd go over things. I never knew a chap just like him. He said the one great fact which philosophers had neglected was that sex was a fact of the mind. I used to argue with him and wonder what he meant, but I think I see. . . .

"Out there, where I go now, I have a little office perched up on the side of the gulch, windows all around and a big table for my papers. I look out — I feel I can see almost to White River — for I've come a long way to be with you — and down below me I can see little specks moving about doing the

things I tell them to do, drilling and blasting and measuring. Six of 'em were killed the other day; you can't be too careful with dynamite. Of course that had nothing to do with me; but if I wasn't careful — Lord! And the whole face of things being changed under your hand. Sometimes it makes you feel almost like a god. And you know, sometimes when I look out I can think I see a goddess coming to meet me and cheer me up, out of the hills or perhaps down the track I'm running. She'll be coming along, and the wind blowing her skirts, her hair blown out all shiny in the sun, laughing a little, and coming straight towards me —"

"Walking —?"

"Yes, walking, striding, and perhaps a dog at her heels. Didn't Venus have hounds? No, she had doves, didn't she? Diana had hounds. Well, it doesn't matter which. I know she's not there, really, I know it with my mind, and yet it's in my mind that I know she is! How do you square that? Imagination or what? Perhaps your Mrs. Cassagryer could explain it. And the queer thing is, you know, I've never seen her; with all the women I've seen — and lots of them are called goddesses, but I don't think they are — there's something lacking. And I'm old enough, I ought to know. I tell you when I see one I'll know, and I'll know how to greet her."

We came down to a more mortal level and spoke of her whom we rarely mentioned, whom it might seem we had almost forgotten. That other author of my being had taken up her residence somewhere in Central America — Panama, I think.

[&]quot;You think at last you're worthy —?"

[&]quot;Why not?"

"You hear from her?" I asked.

"Only through her lawyer. I send him drafts twice a year, and he sends me her receipt."

I was moved to a question. "Wasn't she a goddess?"

My father looked at me. "Not now — no. Perhaps she was once, I must have thought so. . . ."

"Don't you remember what you thought?"

"Why should I?"

I think I remembered better than he; I remembered my parents and their relation to each other —which I saw whole, the disagreements hadn't been all. And yet it was natural how for my father only the horror remained, there had been so much of it; I saw that too, and remembered, and pieced it together by rule of my own later experience. They had been crazed by each other's ill faith, and driven to fresh insults and fresh breaches; their love was held up torn and bleeding between them, and both fighting for the honor of the mortal stab. But the woman struck twice to the man's once, and he, in defense of his soul, turned her out — an action considered dishonorable by an unselfish world; turning should be the woman's privilege. Yet this one, because she had abused her privileges, had them taken away from her, better late than She was forbidden to remarry, she was forbidden her child, her dishonor was stripped for the public glare; her punishment had been swift and sure, fully adequate to her crimes — one looked at it with hard eyes or not at all. thing, she had, her precious freedom, she too might have known its joys, even as I. I spoke of it, putting us, in that, on a level.

"Her freedom's a very different thing from yours, Rosie."
My father might have meant in law.

Something I hadn't thought of before came up to me. "You know—she can't be young."

- "She was forty-six last August."
- "Well —?"
- "Well—?" My father repeated after me. I had nothing more to say, and he filled my silence by explaining what I hadn't happened to have known, that it was purely gratuitous on his part, paying her alimony—in fact, it wasn't technically alimony at all, for the courts hadn't given her a cent. "I just wanted you to know, Rosie, that I'm not such a rotter as you think me. I wouldn't want her to suffer—that's really why I do it. But do you know why she thinks I do it? To keep her out of my sight—she knows if she ever shows her face to either me or you, it's over, never again!"
 - "How does she know?"
 - "Goosy I told her while she was packing her trunks!"
 - "But you wouldn't have her suffer —?"
- "Of course not. She's your mother and once she was my wife. . . ."

I looked over to a sheer depth of pain, went off to meditate long upon iniquity. The everlasting problem — men and women. But then, as my father had said, it wasn't the only thing in the world. There was dancing — always that — and the piece I was playing, introducing more of pantomime than I had formerly attempted; tragedy, comedy, a princess in quest of the moon, the action explained by a chorus — invisible, not after the manner of choruses. A prince, of course, he in quest of the princess, and the moon and the princess at last possessed. "For she has followed the sun by day," says the Chorus, "and the stars by night, and she has been wet by the rains of the gray vapor and dried by the winds of the blue

ether. She has braved the moon in her own heavens and led her by the silver chains of her desire. She has danced before the moon, treading the high edge of clouds, and her little feet are weary; she has prayed before the moon, her clasped hands warmed by the fires of eternity, and now the moon lies beside her, like a curled yellow kitten in sleep. And the prince comes over the hill, and the light of her blazons his shield. The princess, greeting the prince, looks back to the moon and finds her gone, and then together they watch their moon rise splendid in the sky—" But there again, the same thing, men and women. For escape I could have wished myself sexless—there would be freedom—and yet Simon had put it a fact of the mind.

Penny Black wasn't a fact of the mind; sitting at his club and writing letters, wanting me with him — I didn't doubt that — and feeling himself a little abused because his wants weren't met; having an impulse — I knew just how strong — to throw over the whole thing as having too much of mind altogether. And then finding himself bound, invisibly. Without Valentine he had looked for peace; he still looked, I thought.

XXXIV MIND

When I came East on my way to London I put up at a hotel, and wouldn't have let Simon know I was in town except that there were some draperies of mine in Madison Avenue which I expected to use. I telephoned him and told him which they were, and he brought them to me himself. I looked at him coldly, and as far as I could make out, he looked so at me. We talked of business matters, and he seemed pleased that I was getting on so well. Again it was mind — he called it this time brains — which really mattered. He commented upon the comparative simplicity of my quarters, and hoped I was comfortable.

"You should have gone to the St. Regis; they'd have done you better—"

"My dear Simon, I can't afford the St. Regis! Two rooms, a room for Katie, a bath — what more could any woman want?"

"It's the wall paper — I don't think I could stand that."

"I think it's rather jolly."

He sent me flowers to soften its terrors. He insisted that I make use of the automobile which had formerly been mine. "You say you have a million things to do and three days to do them in —" He put it on the score of practicality, and there was nothing to do but accept. I have drawn the inference that he was cold; he was friendly too, and, as will be seen, thoughtful. He might have been an admirer of long stand-

ing, who had given up hope for himself, but still claimed the privileges of friendship. Barely a word of the cause of our parting — a mere glance about, and a "Where's the young man —?"

"Where did you expect?" I said. "Sitting on the hearth rug with a blue ribbon round his neck?"

"Hardly that!" said Simon, and the incident was closed. The question, however, was one which under the circumstances might have occurred to any one. I hadn't seen Penny since December, leaving my husband and leaving him at the same time, for he had been in New York all winter biding his destiny. It would be only upon my return, so he said, that he would feel my marital rupture complete — then we would see. We would see where he was, I suppose. And now Simon had asked me and I had begged the question —I had begged it, the day before, even to Penny himself. . . .

For months we had been apart, living only in our memories and our hopes of one another, and we could bring to our meeting the emotion pent by waiting. It was too much. It was unbelievable that here we were, face to face; we doubted our senses. "You — it can't be —"

And, "You —!" The wall paper passed unnoticed.

"I know," said Penny, "I shall wake. I always do. I wake, and then I think, and sleep, and think again —"

I put my hands up to his shoulders and assured him I wasn't a dream.

"No, you're a real live lady in a charming hat and a charming gown, quite as if you'd stepped from a bandbox instead of a train, and yet — you know it's queer — you're the lady of my dreams at the same time!"

I was happy — the deep grave happiness close upon tears,

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but out of which laughter is born. Speech falls haltingly behind, monosyllabic, exclamatory; there is no future and no past; thought is dulled, or made so light and fine as to be outside our common perception; our little folded souls quicken, chrysalis-wise — inform our sense.

All this before I say that Penny stayed and dined. He wanted me to go out and dine gayly with him, and I remember hazily realizing through my preoccupation that it wouldn't do — I explained the disadvantages of celebrity. It didn't matter — we'd stay where we were.

I ate food I usually avoided, inadvertently, and made havoc by continuing to fill a glass long since filled. "I don't know what I'm about — forgive me —"

It was my young man's pleasure to forgive me, and he said I needed not only forgiveness but care — which was best given from the same side of the table; and afterward, in the presence of the waiter removing marks of the feast, we put the distance of the whole room between us as if to make up for the closeness the poor little man hadn't even been privileged to see. I remember Penny, supremely easy, vainly searching for a receptacle for his burnt-out cigarette and at last disposing of it through a window which he opened for that purpose. I remember his turn: "Rose, it's raining."

[&]quot;I know it is."

[&]quot;Rotten weather."

[&]quot;Rotten."

And as the waiter left — "But it's nothing to us, is it?"

[&]quot;Not a thing!"

[&]quot;Nothing matters — does it?"

[&]quot;No, nothing matters." We said it after one another like worshipers in church.

In fact the rain and storm seemed to accent our own cheer — we, in the warmth and brightness, my lover and I together, and outside the rain beating upon the roofs, spattering the windows, drenching the less fortunate than we. It muffled the sounds of the city, which so didn't break our solitude; the heavens wept for our joy and washed our love clean of dust. Penny sat at my feet, his head in my lap, the smooth blond head that had found in its time so many resting places. I stroked away thought of those, covered with my own the little ghosts of hands which had done that same thing before me. Mine were white and thin, for my passion had worn me; they had all been white enough, I knew, even to Valentine's — slender — fluttering — I remembered her curious bent thumb. I remembered, and again I accepted simply the great gifts the gods had brought me.

I was asked if I loved. "Love!" I said. "Oh, my own dear —" and bent down.

"It isn't you and I at all —"

"More you and I than ever—who else could it ever be—?"

Penny Black didn't know and cared less. Nothing mattered — nothing except ourselves, whoever we were.

It came to us again that for months we had been apart; and in that time we had both changed and grown for each other. Absence had done more for our love than being together might ever have done. We had had space to think, outside the binding limiting reality. And now, to me at least, it seemed that Penny Black was the fine flower of my own thought — a thought finally so potent that substance had to come.

He decided to smoke, burnt his fingers with the match,

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swore, and apologized for his profanity. He took out his watch, which must have lied, it was so late, and asked abruptly and with head turned away if I wanted him to go.

- "My own love, do I ever want you to go?"
- "It's not what I mean --"
- "I know it isn't."
- "Well, if you know it, what then?"

He faced me, an unexpected force — to be reckoned with, I saw — supplicating only in gesture. I saw that he was confident. But as I looked at him I kept what I saw well away from my eyes, also the comprehension I had of it and the wish I didn't wish him to perceive. I spoke in direct answer to his first question:—

"Yes, go!"

It was the authority one has it up one's sleeve to use with an animal — a dog — one of Simon's horses.

Later — not half an hour later — the telephone rang in my ear; he had realized the error of his obedience. But then my comprehension had passed, I had work to do on the morrow — the morrow was near. His reply to what I said to him ended with a word which was either sell or hell. I couldn't be sure. No doubt he felt himself sold, no doubt the latter alternative was descriptive of that condition. And curiously enough, again I had no pity; I had loved him and should infinitely — at the moment at stake I didn't. I slept the sleep of weariness and peace, rose and went forth to the accomplishment of my affairs. It was on that same day that I saw Simon, who brought me the draperies I required and asked me — I have already recorded the request — the whereabouts of the wrecker of his home. I didn't know it will be seen how at the moment I didn't particularly

care. . . . Short shrift, it might be said, for the confession of so long a loving — hardly meet in a few hours to be absolved of months.

For months, as I say, I had loved, for months waited for those very hours which at last came and were in themselves supreme. Their supremacy, their rare faultlessness, perhaps made for their finality; and yet I know that Penny hadn't found them so — and I didn't particularly care what Penny found. . . . It was the love I could take between my two hands — I've spoken of it before — take it as I took my lover's smooth blond head. In a way it was simple enough. Mind was there, and sex, mind in the eyes that saw, in every finger tip that felt, even in the fine swirl of my dress about my feet. My beloved had kissed its hem — not fit, he had called himself, to perform that rite, and had talked of the garments of the saints, the kisses by which the lame were made to walk and the blind to see.

"You love me as much as that—?" I had asked him. It was plain at last he had loved me more, and I had bidden him go, and myself was happy.

XXXV. THE RACE TO THE SWIFT

I WENT to London, and there found Valentine. It seemed the time for facing her had come at last, brought by the fates. Now, at her fair hands, I should receive the gift she alone had the right to offer me. Penny Black, growling in New York, — for I had left him in no good humor, — little knew what parlous days those were for him, how his doom hung, like the doom of a slave brought to the market. This sublime unconsciousness of what impended struck me, from across the seas, with a humor that kept my spirits up for the ordeal I expected to go through. I forgot my uneasiness in my amusement at knowing something Penny didn't.

His wife had left Montreal at the instance of her Welsh cousins, stayed with them for a while, and now in London was with that same Mrs. Storkington who had been so kind to her years before. This lady went in for celebrities, and so knew Mrs. Cassagryer, who was at this time well launched in fame and fortune, and was established in a charming little house in Kensington. She entertained on Monday evenings, and it was there, quite late, after the theater, that I had met Valentine's benefactress and learned that my beautiful friend was with her. It had come as a surprise — almost reaching shock — her name rapped out together with mine: "Miss Carson — or is it Mrs. Feather — Featherly —?" I assured her the professional appellation would do — "Miss Carson, I'm delighted to see you, Valentine Black talks of you so much. You have the wisdom of the serpent, the

character of Saint Elizabeth, the beauty of Venus. She adores you. She says you've stolen her husband — in so far as I'm able to judge, that's very obliging of you — but nevertheless she adores you!"

There it was, my doom and Penny's, giving me no grace. Mrs. Storkington was a large woman with a large voice. I was able to murmur some conventional incoherence, and then, "Is Valentine here?"

"Not here — somewhere else — she's a tremendous success, you know, perpetually on the gad. But if you mean, is she in town, why, yes, she's stopping with me." It was plain from the lady's manner that young women who were successes didn't waste their time at Mrs. Cassagryer's, also that I was wofully ignorant of the whereabouts of fashion.

I waived that. "Tell her," I said, "that I wish she'd come and see me—" and gave the name of my hotel.

"I'll tell her," said Mrs. Storkington, and came direct to the root. "I suppose you and she will have a great deal to say to each other."

She bid me farewell, I feeling as any one might after a swift sudden contact with a ponderous object. I took the bull by the horns by supplementing my message with a note. Wouldn't Valentine look me up some morning about twelve, or, better yet, wouldn't she breakfast with me? At some inconvenience to myself, I gave her a choice of days—I could go gallantly to the last.

Valentine came, and never mentioned her husband except inasmuch as she jestingly spoke of herself as a widow. She talked a great deal about a young Sir Jaspar Fennel, whose photograph she carried in a locket, and whose flowers she wore at her bosom. She impressed me as being both

more beautiful and more light-minded than I had thought her. It really seemed as though she had forgotten Penny, as though he wasn't important enough to hang in her already well-hung gallery. She had forgotten him, therefore how could she talk of him? And between friends what was a little thing like a husband? "My dear," I can imagine her saying, "we quarrel -? About what -? It isn't worth it!" As usual, she asked me for a box, which I sent her, and had Sir Jaspar and other admirers — all presided over by Mrs. Storkington. I could do no less than ask them to my dressing room, and accept their invitation to supper. The ghost of Penny and another London spring hovered over the feast, but was seen by no one but Valentine and me. Mrs. Storkington stared at me a good deal, and bore out her interest by later discussing me with Mrs. Cassagryer. is it?" she is reported as saying. "Do I scent a scandal, or do I not?"

I had left my husband because I had wished to give myself wholly to art — that was all. I commended my friend for hitting upon what had so much of truth, and took the opportunity of explaining the situation more exactly. There was little comment, but Mrs. Cassagryer remembered the young man the year he was in London with his wife — a handsome little beast. I protested he was neither little nor a beast. The air thus cleared, I moved my things to Kensington.

We four women, the two younger ones under the protecting wing of the two older ones, formed a singularly felicitous group. As far as our separate occupations permitted, we went about together; there were picture galleries, concerts, shops, jolly little after-theater suppers, and sometimes on Sundays long drives into the country with, as a goal, the garden parties of the great — to which, Mrs. Storkington having procured us cards, she now had the glory of introducing us. I remember lawns of a sort unattainable in our sharper climate, and moving across them angular people who reminded me of dogs that had been bred too far. Those were gay days. I confess them so. In the absence of Penny I consoled myself as I might, and found it dulled my longing; I had always kept rather clear of the casual heart-throb; admiration I took in the mass or not at all; but now all that was changed, I confess to the pastime known as flirtation. I think it gave me a certain pleasure to rival Valentine.

She was magnificent. Her silence seemed to put me in the wrong, and I longed to tell her just how matters stood, but if she could hold her peace, why, so could I. It was a little like living over a volcano, but as the price of my adventure it might not be too dear. I had little to wish for. Our piece was a success, our houses packed, I was considered to dance more exquisitely than ever, Syms felt justified in preparing for a new production under his own management, and had discovered a new composer of whom he had the highest hopes. On every side success was written large, fortune not so much smiled as beamed. Every hour was filled full of either work or play. I had inherited my father's capacity, his endurance that scorned respite. If I had had leisure, I should have spent it in thought, and this I had no desire to do; even the moments — unavoidable — when thought clamored, showed me what it would be. have been times when I have known — quite definitely that I was happy, now I knew I was not; and yet, I say, had little to wish for.

I found it wasn't good to be alone; but the English ease could well fit itself to my need, and there was always some one ready to heel. I remember particularly young Lord Dampier, son of an earl and grandson of the Duke of Marsh — he was the most exalted of my followers, and also the simplest. He admired me both as a woman and as a dancer — if there were any crumbs to fall, he might be there to pick them up as well as the next one — if there were not, well and good, he had the patience of Job. After my season closed, Mrs. Cassagryer and I spent a month on Scottish moors; we had planned for seclusion, but Dampier invaded it — himself and his gun and a couple of dogs. The shooting season hadn't begun, but he managed an occasional rabbit, and so found an ostensible aim. Together we tramped, breathing the good air and feeling the hard earth beneath our feet. He was a curious mixture of shyness and boldness, extreme humility, and the arrogance of the ascendant class. The Duke of Marsh's title was one of the oldest in England, deep in the soil, Arthurian, I think; his grandson wasn't proud of it, and yet one saw his imagination couldn't compass belonging to a family without it; he was unconscious as he was unconscious of his boots, and yet there it was. interested me both as a type and as a man; he didn't know how much, or how much I liked him.

He took his defeat well, having first told me that he loved me, and I believed him in that—perhaps wrongly—as much as I ever have believed any man.

It will be seen that I had left London and Valentine with nothing settled; it hadn't been the right time for facing her, after all. On the voyage back I cursed myself for cowardice, every league of sea behind me was an added barrier between me and the man I loved. I wanted to turn and go back, go to Valentine in the Welsh fastnesses to which she had again retired, and in a cool, dispassionate sort of way discuss the great problem which so concerned us both. With the result of this discussion safe in my pocket, I could return to New York and Penny. But of course I didn't turn back. I went on to the port the steamer took me, and once there became reabsorbed by the exigencies of my calling. I grew to take things rather by and large, happier and perhaps harder, got into the habit of my new life as I had done with other new lives before.

Syms's new production was a failure. That in itself was a disaster sufficiently overwhelming to make insignificant any merely private affairs. We had the pleasure of seeing all our profits from "The Moon" wiped out at one grand stroke. Simon magnificently offered to reinstate us, but I couldn't let him do that. He came to see me, and we had a memorable interview; he didn't press me — "Well, Rose, do as you think best. You know that what I have is yours—" He told me that he wanted me to come back to him, but it seemed to me that it was the light of reason in his eyes rather than the light of love. He surveyed me coldly, and quoted the old proverb: "You can lead a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink." I didn't see what that had to do with He asked after Penny, and I answered his questions. "So things are quite as they should be —? Well," he said, and rose to go, "I should somehow have more respect for the young man if they were not."

Luckily my own capital was still untouched; but I preferred that it should remain so, and accepted an engagement in vaudeville. The much-featured headliner of a certain man-

ager had suddenly fallen ill, so in November I had the good fortune to get her place. Syms and I put together a selection of dances; he helped me with them, and then, as he received an offer from his old enemy, Daniells, to stage a big scenic piece, I let him go, keeping with me a man who had proved himself competent under the guidance of Syms, but whom I found anything but that left to himself. I discovered possibilities in labor of which I had hitherto been ignorant. My girls went with me — all of them — an unprecedented act of devotion; if I had had new girls to train, I don't think I could have done it. As it was, the wheel refused to move without the constant pressure of my shoulder. Our act lasted half an hour; we gave two performances a day for thirty weeks, and rehearsed in the morning. No philandering So little, in fact, that my girls complained of feeling lonely. They wouldn't have done it, they said, for any one but me — I was a sort of inspiration; and they knew that I was Simon Featherly's wife, and by that didn't have to work — which inspired them the more. "Still," said one, "you have your name over the door. What I'd give to have my name spelled out in lights like that! Any one — any one just passing by — can see." It seemed to her the final vanity — the final abandonment.

I found I had to readjust myself to new conditions. My public had always been largely recruited from the supercritical, rather jaded folk who had tired of the ordinary forms in which amusement was served up to them, and were good enough to find in me a welcome refreshment. I appealed to brain and sense, a cultivated brain, a cultivated sense; the applause I had was none the less loud for being usually with gloved hands. Now all that was changed. I

competed with minstrels and troupes of trained dogs, impersonators and acrobats, and had to hold the attention of people who were drawn by these attractions. Who was I, with my name in lights and a salary reputedly fabulous? It was said I could dance — well enough with a stage to myself and two hours and a half for recovering my false steps; but strike off the two, follow me with Bones and Tambo well, it was still for me to show what I could do. For dramatic art depends for its life upon the response of the audience - I don't mean in the commercial sense - you can't dance to blank walls or blank comprehensions, but light half your fires from the reflection of the fires you kindle. Besides, actors are essentially pleasure-loving creatures; we don't like to do what is disagreeable, and if it isn't disagreeable to play to an unresponsive house — I've done it and I know — then I don't understand the meaning of the word.

Finally I danced my Gitana to the crashing accompaniment of a full orchestra, discarding my guitars as too delicate a contrast to the music which had preceded them; instead of my players I arranged a background of six of my girls, three dressed as men. I made them laugh and chatter and sway to the beat of the music. They sat, a row, before the flush curtain which then went up to a stage full of their leopard-clad sisters—echoes of my Spring Chorus. The Spanish ones threaded their way out among them, I meanwhile changing black for tawny, poinsettias for a wreath, sandals for the high red heels. After that I should have liked to have done the Dance of the Clowns from "Folly," but Daniells held the rights. I tried, instead, various experiments, at one time a toe dance, again a new nautch Syms had taught

me, and some original things of my own. I so far demeaned myself as to do a sailor's hornpipe. . . .

Thirty weeks I danced, and I went to cities I hadn't been to before; yet they meant very little to me as new places. There was always the hotel and the theater, the way from one to the other as seen from the carriage window, the climate — hot or cold — and flowers and letters and requests. People wanted me to do the most extraordinary things - they always have - everything from dancing on the table at a midnight supper to giving an address before a woman's club. The latter I did once to oblige my press agent. It was in Spokane at eleven o'clock in the morning -- need I say more? The chairman introduced me as Miss Rose Carson, the foremost dancer in the United States, whose own life gives the lie to the calumnies heaped upon her profession. I found myself embarrassed and with an impulse to deprecate such praise — my subject was made doubly difficult — "Dancing in its Effect upon Public Morals." I did what I could, explaining how little I knew of either the effect or the institution. I was aware that my audience was more interested in the cut of my gown than in what I had to say.

In June I came East with experience to my credit and a restored bank balance. I had gained in reputation as well—in every way I had succeeded. Definitely, I felt—I don't know why I hadn't felt so before—I had given value for value; my gift had its price in the open market. No coddling, no favor. There it was, my success clear in terms of good green dollars. Success before had seemed an illusive thing—the world had been at my feet, I knew—but now I could walk free, the world in my pocket. Free—I accepted an engagement

of two weeks on a New York roof garden. I made my own terms: one dance, one performance a day, no chorus, a salary almost as extraordinary as the printed report of it. The little Jews with whom I dealt debated and at last agreed. I filled their house — or roof — and during my engagement they raised the price of seats. After that I rested, and in the autumn reopened with Syms. He had allied himself with a new organization of managers, Daniells and others, and was in a position of some power. A great deal was at stake, but this time we won. Our piece was "The Adventures of Poupine."

Now, as I write, Poupine is still remembered, still played; has become, in her short day, classic. Poupine has circled the globe; she is like a certain much-advertised commodity upon which the sun never sets. May hers never do so! I bear her no ill will, even though I myself have danced her on to glory more than five hundred times. If it wasn't for an utter weariness of the thing too strong to be longer denied, I might be doing it yet. Poupine is one of those miracles, occasionally sent by the fairies, of which the public never weary; they can't have enough, but must bask in its effulgence again and again. There might be other stories, other music, other dances, all in themselves as deserving of It isn't what they deserve that makes the difference. it isn't any intrinsic value; with the public I'm quite sure it isn't entirely art — but what —? People have been kind enough to say it's my dancing. That's nonsense; I've danced before, and, besides, other dancers but me have succeeded with Poupine. It's a quality which can't be gauged — if it could we in the profession would be unable to count or gather our wealth.

THE RACE TO THE SWIFT

Poupine is a doll with the soul of a child, given with her life every faculty save speech — and, at the last, one cry I have to show for that before the soul of the child passes. In the presence of what is supposedly myself — Poupine lifeless, but is in fact an extraordinary creature of Syms, created in my image, I - the spirit - dance, rejoicing at my freedom from the thrall of sawdust. I must dance into oblivion all that has gone before - make it plain that Poupine was sawdust --- and now the spirit leaps. . . . I've done it more than five hundred times, and every time, there in the trap as my doll's dress is being torn from me to discover beneath the draperies of soul. I have one horrible moment when I think I can't go through with it again. And then, there I am leaning over the dead doll, covering her gently with one of my own bright wrappings and rising from my shrouding and dancing. "Think of yourself," says Syms, "as bein' lighter than the music . . . "

XXXVI. LUTE-PLAYING

And so it went, — struggle, labor, success. Syms came into his own then magnificently. As well as Poupine he brought from his capacious sleeve a successful farce-comedy, a war piece with troops of soldiers effectively handled, and engaged the services of a still brilliant but slightly waning star for the part of Mme. Bovary in a dramatization of the novel. must have borrowed capital — I don't know on what security — and let none say he hadn't his courage. He marked one failure, one moderate profit, and one success. But it wasn't the money he was after, — there was little enough of that in his profession, — but the glory. He wanted to establish himself as something more than a little dancing man. He explained it with a becoming frankness — it was his wish to be more than the man who had taught Carson to dance. I lauded his ambition — far be it from me to covet the sole support of any one's fame.

Mrs. Cassagryer had written her "Bow-Bell" already, and therefore this final development of Syms interested her only introspectively. She felt as I suppose the novelist always feels towards a person they have used in their work, that he was used and done for all time, and resented a little any further evolution. She took more seriously my own growth. She found it very marked after my single-handed struggle; my brow was widened, she said — my eyes deeper set. But then, as she never had written a book about me,

any late changes in my habit and type didn't strike her as unfair. She joined me in Washington Square as soon as Poupine's success assured my settling there. She came with many boxes of books and furniture, much luggage — unmistakably British — a parrot, and for me the gift of a black cat to bring luck — he whom I named Cerberus and placed on a pedestal by my hall door. But for the cat and the parrot it was quite like old times — "Like the old days, Rose, before the Grand Mogul and the Cherub —"

"In spite of the widened brow?" I asked her.

"Oh — they're not responsible for that —" She found the Cherub charming. It was the name she had for Penny Black, and he treated her with the agreeable deference due her proved intellect. "For me," she said, "he draws his deference about him as one might draw a cloak — he doesn't want me to see him. He doesn't know how much I see — he wants to assure me, in spite of his deference, that whatever it is it's wrong. Oh, my dear, look out that a woman is bigger than her virtues and a man than his sins!"

"Isn't Penny big enough?"

"Splendid — magnificent. . . ."

She confessed to me she always had to resist requesting him to prove his splendor by picking her up in his arms and carrying her across the room. He could do it so easily, and it was an experience she never had had and always strangely wished for. Something, some book or play which had lightened the dark annals of her girlhood had this to answer for, and she probably would go to her grave with her wish ungranted. "He might not understand — might think the request peculiar —"

I remember the writer's speculations in this direction

were interrupted by the entrance of the Cherub him-It was plain he was big, but whether in her eyes he was bigger than his sins or not I never knew — it might deal with another dimension in space altogether. let that go as it might. She regarded him as in a way symbolic — a little graven image, neither more nor less, such as the faithful of benighted lands carry about their necks. She has called him also the Lily of the Valley — I being by that the Rose of Sharon. "Penny, forsooth! — Rather, a sovereign of fine gold. . . ." She quotes: "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten housand. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters — " Perhaps she was right, perhaps he was a symbol. Every one we know is so for us; they represent to us either love or life, beauty, joy, pain, and the rest. . . . Penny Black represented love — or that in love which I have named as luteplaying.

For all this time when I have spoken of it little, when I was occupied with deeper matters, it still went on, a strumming in my ears, — the same instrument. Penny, though the chief, wasn't its only player. I've heard it played both ill and well, and sometimes I've recognized the hand of the master. It's not an art where skill is paramount. Often the simplest tunes have the most charm, and the more critical one's ear becomes, — the more capable of appreciating skill, — the more is this so, I find. . . . Charm — Penny possessed it to an extent. Even his faults had charm. There were his standards, his codes, points of view he took it for granted you shared, reasons and explanations which seemed to him adequate; sometimes my forgiveness was taxed, and yet I still could laugh. And I've loved him with a con-

suming fire when I've laughed at him loudest, when I've been forced to forgive him most. Sometimes I've tried to explain to him his barbarities — always a case in point — and stopped short with the fear that what I said might change him, might make him other than he was. . . .

I remember his entertainment of a Western magnate with members of my chorus, and in the good fellowship thus engendered arriving at decisions advantageous to himself. He couldn't quite make it clear to me — the connection — it was one of those subtilties a woman could never understand. It cemented friendship, made his magnate see that he — Penny - was a man of taste, a man, said Penny, worthy of his confidence. I pondered about confidence. I might never have known, but he felt he owed me thanks; my girls, in being mine, had a cachet which enhanced their value. And Penny hadn't done the thing halfway — the gayest, smartest supper room in town, no less, and a selected six — all crème de la crème — all turning their lovely eyes to the conquest of his guest. He himself had been content to bask in a reflection of glory. He compared himself to a Roman statesman entertaining another with feasting and song — surprising state secrets.

Sometimes the spell under which he held me seemed altogether light and fleeting, I felt I might wake to a day when it would be quite gone; and sometimes it seemed that the whole world might go, fall prey to dissolution, and my love would endure immortal. I remember a spring Sunday when we'd motored far out into the country and sat with our lunch spread upon the grass of a quiet wayside. We were so arranged that we could observe without being ourselves directly in the public view. Sunday couples strolled, unaware of our nearness; one more ardent than the rest halted before us

and kissed with ceremony—it was too much for Penny, who turned a somersault and then remained with heels in air in token of his appreciation. I remember him so—a young man punctuating a climax with a coltish action—in no other way could he have expressed himself as well. I hold some statelier memories.

One of night and snow and a drive that he and I took down through the town. I remember the air alive, yet not visibly flaked, and in the sky the soft radiance of a snowy moon; the wind breaking against the glass of the car, and a huddled figure at a street crossing flitting away uneasily at our approach. All good souls were at home in bed, with the coverlids up about their ears; only the venturesome - unquiet spirits — dared the night; we sat close for warmth, and I leaned my cheek to the rough cloth of my lover's coat. It was a night to dream about; the dreams of the good souls at home, — witches rode the heavens, their broomsticks athwart the wind, banshees called from the ridge-poles, forests stood up stark, and the sea purred and spat and the snow speckled its blackness. But for us there was nothing of all that. Our forests were buildings which loomed, their roofs invisible, our witches the rare dim lights that shone through iron shutters, our seas the empty streets. We had gone down Broadway, leaving behind us finally the lights and the people; below Madison Square quiet, below Union Square silence, and then the great thoroughfare whose use was for day, not night, merchandize in the raw — and at last finance, hallowed by the steeple of Trinity. We came back — Liberty Street, Fulton, the City Hall, Canal Street, and Grand, — we shed them all, the lamp posts which to me — an alien — marked them, the ones I forgot to note — and at the end turned west to the Washington Arch, which, threaded, brought me to my door. Penny helped me up the snowy steps, turned my key for me, and I remember standing in the dimly lighted hall, my door still open to the storm, and watching him till he turned the corner up Fifth Avenue.

"Oh, the lights —" sings Mrs. Cassagryer, "And the little light o' loves — And the little feet going by —"

If I were emulating her I suppose I shouldn't allow these chance impressions, these wholly vagrant memories, to have precedence over the more vital points of plot and story. And yet a record of any love — and it's this I've tried for is a record of impressions here and there, memories stored and chosen from the vast mass of those which have fallen away. We remember mercifully, and mercifully we forget. For there is much which doesn't stand the scrutiny of time, imperfections, queer failures of mutual comprehension, the little mistakes, never quite recovered. Sometimes the failures stand out in such array it seems as though one could never overlook them to the qualities beyond, as though love must needs be the blind god — blind and deaf — holding charity above truth. I pick among even such memories as I hold, and even then treat of the setting rather than the I've so often found the setting to be that by which the thing itself is marked. Recalling sunlight or snow, the whistle of a train, dusk in a city street, I remember with it how then I was happy; and the peculiar habit of that happiness at last comes back, perhaps at the time too great to bear consciousness; the shielded gaze was focused upon something Lute-playing, I had thought to find it, and touched strings the lute never knew. Penny Black, uncurbed, would have played another tune, and played it well — a handful

of strings at once, splendid chords, the dominant at last resolved.

Instead, always a strain, at times thought gone wild where act remained in leash, times too when momentous decisions hung by a thread—a love which languished and seemed dead only to be born again; happiness, rarely peace, when peace seemed the source of all good.

As I write it comes back to me vivid, the fatigue of it all, that first winter of Poupine, and Penny wandering about like an uneasy ghost. He presented at last the rather pitiful spectacle of a man adrift from his moorings, a man laboring with emotions and circumstances for which he was by nature unfitted. For I think he grew to love me rather beyond his right capacity for loving. I wasn't his first passion, I know, and I hardly flatter myself that I shall be his last — for I don't believe his vows of eternal faith and memory, he yet will find other roses easier to his plucking — but I disturbed and stirred him. As I say, he was beyond himself; he might have played his lute better, and so been more greatly rewarded, if his hand had trembled less.

If I had this part of my life to live again I should live it as I have without a change; there are people to whom I have owed loyalty, both for myself and for them; there are circumstances which are now right and would otherwise not be so. In practice right, in theory I'm not so sure. It would seem as though I'd lacked courage — which, I can't put it strongly enough, has not been the case — as if all this talk of freedom had little foundation in fact. I had duties. Yet it might have been finer to have set them all aside, to have been carried away gloriously, to have been able to say — my conscience cleared by love — "Take me, the poor thing

that I am. I give all I have and wish the gift were greater—"
Perhaps never have I seen Penny Black — and by that loved
him so much — with so much of understanding — as I do
now the end has come. More of this later. . . . But I can
say now how the end lends a completeness which the relation
had otherwise lacked; it rounds out and makes whole what
in my primitive conception of such things never was whole.

Never have I seen more clearly. I see his virtues as well as his faults. I might not believe his vows or even take his word; I might not entirely respect either his opinions or his deeds, and yet his charm — the spell I've talked of so much — was something higher than mere flesh, had a quality of spirit. And in spirit he was faithful, I knew; and when the mood of it suited him, getting very much the sort of pleasure from the mere fact of his faith as another — less imaginative — would derive from more tangible substance. He was the least innocent person I ever knew, yet with him I recall a phrase — biblical, I think — young, and unspotted of the world. . . .

My clearness brings plain, too, from the veil of the years, another man who, like Penny, was young and good to look upon and who, like Penny, represented love. He, also, had been straight and fine; fine enough, one might have thought, for any woman to have stopped for, but I — possessed of a driving devil — had gone on. I seem always to do that.

I look back to the days of Barney Grant, golden days and silvery nights, the sun shining for us through the waves we threaded, the moon and the stars out at our bidding, the world at our feet. I suppose that was love, and this I've so lately forsworn is love, and Simon Featherly — what is he? I see the three men, the first, the last, and he who is neither.

As I write they seem to stand before me — on the one side Barney, dark and tall, on the other Penny, blond, in the center Simon, beginning to be a trifle bald — shorter and squarer than they — with an arm raised to each fine shoulder, pulling them down a little to his level and smiling, sphinxlike.

Who am I, I wonder, to have so much magnificence spread for my choice? Mrs. Cassagryer says I know too well just who I am, how celebrated, remarkable in every way. and therefore can afford to ignore it as I would another platitude. She says I'm quite consciously simple, and that my simplicity is the very apotheosis of egotism; theatrically, I present myself, in private as in public, only in a different part. I marvel at the kindness the world shows me, I ape shyness, I display all the so-called childishness of the artist. Oh, my friend isn't gentle with me; she knows me at once too well and too little! But all that's not it. . . . I know I'm a dancer, thought beautiful, who nightly fills theaters with those who count themselves her admirers, and who could have for love the flower of the land; my eyes are unfathomable, my muscles of steel, and at my very nod the doors of the great fly open. I know, even as Mrs. Cassagryer has said. those three men have taken me for what I am apart from all that; and there I say — I wonder — who am I to deserve so much honor? Sometimes I wonder so that all this world which is so kind, seems gathered to a point of interrogation.

[END OF BOOK III]



BOOK IV THE HIGH GODS

BOOK IV

XXXVII. THE HORSE HIMSELF

My Big Horse is nearly ridden out; soon I shall slip off his saddle and his bridle and give him a slap on the flank to freedom. I hope his pastures will be green. Green pastures — still waters — I think of the psalm we used to start the day with at Miss Sheffield's.

We started the day with that, I remember, and then we didn't need to; we needed neither comfort nor promises nor peace. Those days were part of some dim, half-forgotten past, so it seems to me - perhaps not dim, clear enough in memory, but belonging to another planet altogether. And yet the same spark of life fires the child that was then, and the woman who is now. I try to see it as the same — it's what I've tried to do in this book. And still at times it has been as if I were telling of the acts and thoughts of some one who was not myself at all. Which is I? The I — the various I's — of the book, or the I I know now? I see myself coldly from without, I am more than ever a stranger to myself, I've attained at last, I think, the true detachment. I've attained an eminence. Ah, it's more than that — I sit high upon Olympus, and what is labor or love or dancing, even, in comparison to the broad high view I get as I breathe the middle air, my highest heaven? Homer describes the gods as having their several palaces on the summit of Olympus, as spending their days in the palace of Zeus, round whom

they sit in solemn conclave while the younger gods dance before them and the Muses entertain them with the lyre and song. Why not the lute—? And I must entertain myself. I do so critically, solemnly; am at once audience and player. My song is before you, my dance also, my capability of a graceful sitting posture must be taken on faith.

All through there has been this mood fighting and clashing with very intimate personalities, wholly contemporary aspects. These latter years especially have been in themselves so very full. There are events I've endeavored to keep out of what I wrote because I hadn't yet caught up with myself; and yet I'm afraid that for the seeing eye these pages are all interlined with little contemporary comments — the contemporary side by side with the historic. I regret the consequent moments of confusion. I shall in future try to atone them by a statistical clarity of statement. I take up my Big Horse and bring him to the point where he himself began to exist.

I have told of Poupine — her triumph — and how in the first season of Poupine I settled in Washington Square and Mrs. Cassagryer came to live with me. Spring came, and I went as usual to London, then Paris, and a furore of praise. With the glory of that still upon me I made a three months' tour here, and again winter and a second season in New York. And then, in the comparative leisure thus brought about, I began to write this book. I still am writing it. . . . Here he is, my Big Horse, grown to a considerable bulk.

I so well remember the bright winter's day of his birth. I was sitting where I'm sitting now, at my desk in the big bow window of my library. The window glasses were still

blurred at the edges from the night's frost and the trees in the Square showed black against the light sky; the grate-fire burned bravely and threw reflections on the polished floor; the Venetian mirror, crystal-framed above the mantelpiece, discovered vistas. Literature — the dancer turned commentator — I smiled at that and set out with all my courage. I remember my wail to Mrs. Cassagryer — "I can't write! And yet I want to — I want to. Help me — tell me — how do you do it?" "My dear, I do it as I can —"

I made, I know, remarkable plans. A presentation of things as they are, — honesty, truth, at all costs; labor, love, and laughter, and my own precious sense of life served up freshly. My twenty-seven years were to be a sort of necklace for which I craved as clasp the result and sum of them all, and yet knew that at twenty-seven one didn't get to that. I knew a great deal — about love, for instance, and the mighty problems of religion. I believed in a divine spark, of which I hoped to learn more, and a morality of intellect I hoped I shouldn't smirch.

Valentine I dispassionately judged, and Simon I was a trifle hard with, and I think gave the impression that he had sins. I gave promise of much I haven't done; there is much I haven't touched at all which at the start I planned for greatly, and again I've gone beyond my original design. Inconsistencies I've reveled in — one in particular. I mean the ultimate fate of my undertaking. I've had moments of pride when I've seen my great work between book covers — frankly, my own memoirs — I praise the reality of the printed page, — the thought held solid in the ink, — and again I welcome the oblivion of lock and key. It doesn't

matter what I write — I can scoff at grammar and the laws of rhetoric, deal gayly with the privacies of soul and friends—because what I write is never meant for reading. Ostrictlike, I hide my head in the sand. I yet don't really know.

I spoke of the cat, Cerberus, of the new dance I was preparing for London in the spring — mandolins and guitars and an unseen voice — of Simon, whom I had seen at the theater conspicuously in a box. I remember my awkward cry: "Why, when a husband and wife are through with one another, can't they leave one another alone?" All that was contemporary — was about myself as I was when I began to write. And along with those impressions which only now come legitimately in the course of my story, I spoke of early things; I went back and described the blue and white patterned paper of my nursery wall and people in my mother's parlor drinking tea out of little flowered cups.

All that winter I worked as I could, two or three hours at a time, getting it in as it were between dances, encountering, and in a measure surmounting, difficulties, and becoming myself more and more absorbed. I searched out the ways and thoughts of my childhood, tried to render them faithfully, putting aside what had come after. I should like if I could to trace page for page the influences at work upon what I wrote; how everything I said of the past was to an extent chosen and accented by what I was thinking of the present. Particularly was this so at the beginning. As I've gone on, I've got more and more into the thing for its own sake—detachment—I have said. But after all, I can't work it out by rule of three. "My dear, I do it as I can —" I've learned the truth of that.

Bit by bit I've learned the truth of much which Mrs.

Cassagryer told me at the outset. I might have been better off if I had taken more advantage of her experience and her advice. Given the same subject, I know how differently Mrs. Cassagryer would have laid her stress. My friend has an eye for the bizarre. The grace, the Old World dignity, the rectitude and sanctity of Washington Square, for instance, she would have regarded as a contrast and a background for the roseate draperies of the dancer. A dancer, irreproachable—she would have found in that rather delicate conceit an exceptional piquancy. I'm afraid she would have dwelt upon certain notes at the expense of others quite as vital to the harmony. To her my Big Horse—as it is—lacks what she calls atmosphere.

This thing, atmosphere, is as the breath of Mrs. Cassagryer's nostrils. It is said that every man has his price; that, I think, is hers, she holds it above the instinctive niceties of her class, her sense of fitness and her pride. Where that ls concerned, nothing is too noble or too ignoble; her lack of prejudice carries her too far — is beyond virtue — she treats the yowlings of cats upon a back fence with the same tender care she might bestow on the loves of Tristan and Isolde. It's the criticism of her later work oftenest heard, that she doesn't sufficiently select. For it's grown upon her, this terrific viewing broadness, and with the opportunities here to her hand I should be inclined to dread what she might do. To every artist his subject, of course; but that once chosen, there is still a choice. It's what I flatter myself I have made. It's what my literary companion doesn't admit. Oh — we've disagreed — in some respects our positions oddly opposite to those we might have been expected to have taken. . . .

She, the writer, and I, the dancer, and she far more interested

than I in the very things of which I as a dancer would be supposed to be most in the midst. . . . I remember that winter how sometimes in the late afternoons I would be sitting here quietly at my desk, and she would be off consorting with her kind — or mine — forsaking quiet for the brighter metal. For her I wasn't in some respects sufficiently a dancer. I often felt I cheated her out of the sort of thing she had the right to expect of me — pathetically she had to seek it elsewhere. Yet she's paid me the compliment of saying I've inspired her. It's the reason she has lived with me, given up her beloved London and all it contained for her of association and friendships. Her vocation it is to transcribe life — she has honored me by the happy delusion that I am in a sense its incarnation — and to be so near the source of things as that no sacrifice would be too great. And still she has had to leave me for a certain sort of life which I've never been able to show her. Omnivorously she takes it all.

She struck up a friendship with Trixie Fanner, and I used to accuse her of finding more inspiration there than she found in me, and confess myself jealous. She met my accusation by reminding me that it was only through me that she knew Miss Fanner — I was ever her benefactress. She said at times I was too clever for her, and Miss Fanner wasn't. "She has no ideas —" The novelist seemed to glory in the omission. But there were other things she noted about Miss Fanner which I at least wouldn't have gloried in. She spoke again of the absence of ideas, and how, granted that, one might expect to find the very apotheosis of the flesh. That one didn't, followed out a theory she had about people who didn't form the habit of thought, showing it

in their bodies as well as in their faces. "It isn't wholly a physical matter, believe me. When they're young—ah, then—youth has a certain thought of its own." She remembered Trixie Fanner ten years ago—then she had youth—but now, at thirty-five, Mrs. Cassagryer found her old—through. "Oh," she said of her, "she looks young enough, she's all polished and smooth, the wrinkles—such as she has—all ironed out, the little fat she hasn't been able to help folded away beneath five-guinea corsets. It isn't, after all, that she is old—I've known younger women who were in every way far more scarred by the passage of time—she's dead. Her little life is withered, gone out inside her, and there's nothing left."

There was something left for Mrs. Cassagryer. Everything was grist to her mill. I remember her once coming in to me where I sat at my work.

"Rose, I'm clean!"

I accepted her quite needless statement and she went on to explain. "It makes me realize how I never could have been so before. I'm sprayed and scrubbed. . . . My dear, a true Temple of Aphrodite — marble mosaics, vine leaves intertwined, Venus fresh-arisen from the waters. Long rooms misty with steam, long marble benches and reclining figures surmised dimly through the mist — an æsthetic interpretation of Hades — why not?" It seemed it wasn't Hades, however, but a Turkish bath place she had been to with Miss Fanner. Again she was less poetic: "We were each provided with a great orange and black plaided blanket in which to wrap our already perspiring forms — the sort of blanket I've seen at home in stables, horses come in from exercise and require something heavy — it completed the illusion."

"What illusion?"

She asserted I didn't understand. She seemed herself to understand everything. "We sat about, our tongues hanging out of our mouths, all in varying stages of disintegration. Near death we rose and left, trailing our blankets behind us — others come, the *personnel* is thus constantly changing. Then we were rubbed down — swish-sh-sh. Signs everywhere, 'The management reserves the right to refuse admission to any person for any reason whatsoever.' — 'Patrons breaking glass will be required to pay for same.' I didn't see any glass being broken—except perhaps it might have been by some of the ugly ones. I suppose the signs are there for the hours when the place is turned over to men." I ventured that it couldn't be very agreeable to know that your own particular square of marble had been occupied but a few hours before by a great unknown man — a man who had to be held in bounds by warnings of just that sort — but she didn't agree with me in the least. Still more racy of the soil, she found it. I told her just how hopeless I thought her.

Again Mrs. Cassagryer: —

"It's a mistake to suppose the commonplace preëmpted by domesticity. Romance. . . . It's a very widespread fallacy that the girl on the champagne poster knows more of it than does the squaw who sits at the door of her tepee, her papoose at her back, and weaves feathers into her brave's head-dress. Romance — poof! With the girl on the champagne poster it resides, like beauty, in the eye of the beholder. Not that Trixie Fanner adorns champagne posters — merely my moral — Rose, you see —?"

If she doesn't find romance, what is it that she finds? For-saking the charming quarters I've been at such pains to

THE HORSE HIMSELF

provide her - bookshelves and upholstered leather, big square windows, empty corners where, as I once told her, the thoughts could gather - leaving all this for what is admittedly without thought. . . . I remember Trixie Fanner's numerous sofa cushions, and the smiling face in the heartshaped silver frame, the quoted "Always," the question always what? Mrs. Cassagryer returns from these excursions snorting, but refreshed in spirit. I think it is that she is taken completely out of herself, her spirit removed, -brushed and washed, — aired, and returned again. places the girl on the champagne poster side by side with Penny Black; she finds her too a symbol — a graven image: "There she is, solid in the wood or stone, even in the flesh" -she finds her to be woman, robbed of her mystery her exactions - supremely simple, and yet graven, an idol, why not a little wayside shrine -? Spiritual refreshment I have surmised; mental invigoration too, for the novelist is never so in the mood for the exercise of her art. Thoughts clamor at her. She too breathes Olympian air - long, cool draughts of it, curiously transmuted from the delicate warmth and scents and brightness of sofa cushions and silver frames.

Yet fresh from this — refreshed by it — she has come to me, thrown her arms to heaven, and said that only in my presence could she breathe. "Broad guage," she says, "straight — big." Whatever she might have meant by that. It was then she would most admit my genius. She has told me I carry it as I do the violets at my corsage — close to my heart, yet lightly. Genius — ideas — but you can't have ideas without life, she has said, and with me it seemed she scratched my ideas and so got at the life beneath. It's what I have tried to do myself, I've tried to do it in this book. . . .

XXXVIII. THE PAST

I've tried so much and so hard, I hope my labors haven't overreached themselves. It's only just, I think, that I should have been so much the source of my friend's inspiration, for I know she's been the source of mine. Without her example I should never have attempted it — I fall back upon her — and now difficulties loom. It was simple enough, talking of what was dead and gone; but now all the time I creep closer to the present, and when the present comes — what then? I shall have to stop, and I shan't know how to stop. I shall stumble, and then my Big Horse will have been ridden out. A slap on the flank to freedom, I say, and what of me then —?

Life was easy at thirteen. I'm looking back now to what I wrote of it: "Instead of being in the grip of a power, I felt myself to be that power. . . . All my new knowledge, all the mysteries and elucidations, were but so much material for me to work with — for me, if necessary, to discard. . . . All the visible world together turned to a mass of shadows, and waited, shadowy. . . . The world existed unaware of itself . . . led blindly in the thrall of an enwrapping melody of which I alone grasped the theme. . . . All the poor, dismembered parts of life were fused together to a single embodiment, which was the wonder of my dancing, and a single figure, which was I. . . ."

No need then to ask who, or which, or what.

I wrote of being dismissed from Miss Sheffield's school, of

communion with my father, of embarkation over unknown seas, Valentine sending me roses, and Penny, young and unregenerate. I wrote of "the investing wonder of youth." I recounted my first sight of the sea, my love of London the early years there, our lodgings near Portland Place, and work and Syms, Miss Cholmondeley's vain efforts in the direction of spiritual grace. I spoke of my mother and how I used to think of her — I, come to order and peace, and yet longing for that disturbing presence; I told how I used to hear her voice in the voices of the London dusk. "And gradually," I said, "my thought of my mother came to be like the thought of some one who had paid a brief visit in the far past, come for a space, a jesting visitor from a foreign shore, bringing strange looks and strange customs, and folding for a while the great pinions she had afterwards stretched in flight. . . ."

In the spring I was interrupted in my work by the production of my new dance — the one of the mandolins and the unseen voice; but that once launched, and coming as it did after Poupine, it was launched surprisingly well, I was again able to go on. While in New York I had been writing of London, praising the old city and wishing myself there, and now, that goal attained, I yet wrote of it — London and Syms, the studio in Great Queen Street, the trophies of Syms's hunting. Musical instruments, I remember, cymbals and gongs and tambours, scarfs banded with metal, sandals from the South — and more than all the genius of the man himself. I described the circumstances of my début, the new attitude of my father, and how the public gaze had clothed for him in flesh and blood the will-o'-the-wisp of his daughter's pursuit — something deep in the parental being had been stirred.

And then my interview with Henry Daniells, the upshot of that and preparations for "Aladdin's Palanquin." So far was my progress traced. I was cold and clear, weaving closer and closer — "Meanwhile reliearsals for 'Aladdin's Palanquin' went on apace. . . ." That was unfaltering enough. And then comes uncertainty — preoccupation, badly covered.

I apologize for my success,—as though success needed apology,—theorize about the necessities and moralities of the stage, am at some pains to point out the conventionality of my own life. "I've been," I said, "shut in by footlights..." I wondered if it would always be so. "There are times when I feel that.... But then the public gaze would save me, for whatever I was—whatever I did—I should see it reflected there tenfold...." I felt my salvation to be there. I spoke of the walls of my prison, and yet I clung, I chained myself, for safety. And the reason for my too evident concern lay not with the historic past, but had its source in the very immediate present—in history which was as I wrote very much in the making.

For that summer — the summer when I played in the piece which followed Poupine — Penny Black came over to London. He came with no other purpose than to see me, his hands for the time washed clean of railroads, his powers all clear, and he said he was tired of waiting. So was I, but I didn't tell him that. Instead I faced him, and looked at him, and counted over his faults one by one as a Beadsman tells his beads.

It comes back to me now, the terror, the sheer horror of gaping chasms. It had a certain wild sort of pleasure about it too. For nothing can ever alter what I thought of Penny,

what I felt for him — the bad Penny, I used to call him, the abominable, worthless, counterfeit Penny — he called himself the old plugged copper cent that little boys use for getting candy out of slot machines. We rivaled each other in names, a sort of tender humor sometimes with us taking the place of endearments. I shan't forget.

He came to London that summer, and loomed suddenly portentous. I meant more to him than he had thought any woman ever could mean, he was ill with his love for me, he came to me — a man tortured, broken as on a wheel. I had left my husband — well — his wife had left him. I asked him, where Valentine was; I knew she was not in London. It seemed she had spent the winter before with her friend Mrs. Storkington traveling in Egypt, and now to make up for the unwonted lark she was back in Montreal with the young Pennington, who was there at his grandmother's. The boy was nine years old, and went to school. I was jealous of Valentine for him quite as much as ever I had been so for his father. "Don't you want to see him?" I asked.

I could see her husband thought it on my part an unnecessary statement; but I was curiously glad of every charm she had, each one was a defense against what I felt to be my own

[&]quot;Yes, of course I want to see him -"

[&]quot;Don't you want to see her?"

[&]quot;Her —?"

[&]quot;Valentine."

[&]quot;No, why should I?"

[&]quot;There are times," I said, "when the old ties have their pull, when we forget what has come between —"

He looked at me. "Perhaps it's like that with you."

[&]quot;No," I said, "it isn't. But Valentine was beautiful...."

danger. I marshaled them, first for myself — they seemed thus, so many barriers — then for him. "Don't you remember her —?" I said.

Again I saw he disapproved my question. "Of course I remember her—"

"And remembering her, you still want me?" I set about making him angry. He would have separated us — decently, he put it — and I brought us together, it was as much for myself as for him. I brought her up — everything.

"... the hair, copper come alive, the eyes, the budding mouth, the small, close-set ears, the towering white throat; the whole magnificent length of her —? Velvet and ivory. Any other woman must seem small and poor." As I talked I convinced myself. What could a man be thinking of, the husband of a being like that, to accept calmly her desertion of him, to fancy himself more under the spell of another woman? For myself I was modest, she could out-point me, even to the exquisite head, a fitting crest for the full throat. As for brains, perhaps I won — but she had no need of them; her beauty, as I explained to Penny, had a brain of its own.

It was a queer scene we had, there at my hotel (my father had given up the house near the Regent's Park), ugly as scenes go, in spite of talk of beauty. We said things we had never said before, questions arose between us. We spoke of faithlessness and faith — divorce. Penny asked me if I were thinking of it, and I asked him if he were — what did Valentine think?

But Valentine had no grounds, it seemed, and if her husband tried it he would run the chance of her turning about — bringing what he called a counter-suit. "She has no grounds," he repeated; "but it might be disagreeable—"

It seemed he meant it might be disagreeable for me—he relieved, not to say illumined, the situation by a bit of imagery: "Three little ducks paddling about in a mud puddle all together—" And then, "You forget, Rose, that you're a very celebrated woman, you'd figure large—we all should—it wouldn't be the simple scandal of the lowly. Oh, I should win—I say, she has no grounds—but before I did that there'd be a great deal said on both sides, there'd be, you know, a great deal to say—"

"It would hardly be worth while."

"Hardly. And then where would you be?" It seemed that I too had a husband, and Penny pointed out that if I set about doing anything legal with him, why, I'd never be believed — his previous victory over Valentine would in the eyes of the world go for nothing. "Don't you see, we're tied? And what is all this law at best — what does it mean? The weary waiting—" Again the refrain, "You and I love each other — isn't that enough?" From what he said it seemed to be too much; his speech stood out bleak — too bleak to be set down here; with words he stripped me bare and covered me with words; he revealed in himself depths and heights. I think Simon would have respected him then. He had played lap dog long enough, been led about on a silver chain, fed sugar plums — did I think they were food for men? — at any rate he had enough of them. He needed stronger fare. Whether he was beyond himself or whether he consciously allowed himself license of utterance, I don't know. I remember one thing, "I want to feel nothing sacred —"

Our talk was interrupted by the arrival — inexorable — of my hour for going to the theater.

Penny drove with me through the pale English dusk. I was

staying at a little hotel near Lancaster Gate, and we drove down Oxford Street and down Park Lane and through Piccadilly, a pair of undoubted looks and fashion. He was as he liked to be, hat in hand, head bared to the coolness, and he sniffed up the evening air with an obvious refreshment which consorted ill with a man who was passing through fire. At the stage door he left me; he hadn't had any dinner and would manage to pick up something before he came back to see me dance; the performance didn't start for half an hour.

"I suppose you won't go to supper with me afterwards?" he had said.

"No."

"I suppose I mayn't come and have supper with you?"

"No, you better not. I want to think."

He spoke gravely. "I want you to think."

I did nothing but think. That night — sleepless — I gave myself utterly to the mighty problem, and tried to bring solution out of darkness; but the darkness had held to its own even when morning broke. It wasn't till Penny was with me again — he arrived at noon, and at least I could lunch with him — that I had a suggestion to make. I asked him why he didn't go back to his wife.

"Why should I?"

"If you wanted to, would you go back — I mean in spite of everything?"

"You mean would I overlook everything she's done — the way she's treated me?"

"Yes."

"Well, if I wanted to go back, I can't tell what I might do. But I don't want to." We were lunching at the Savoy, at a window which overlooked the river. He glanced out at it as he spoke, and he might have meant from his expression that he didn't want to toss himself to the fishes. "I want you," he said. His talk of the day before evidently constituted a precedent; he felt we were on a closer footing; all the past years of talk had counted for less. That was for him — for me, I felt apart, alone, and the one thing I desired was a lone-liness more complete. I set myself to bring it about, to persuade him to go back even against his own immediate desires. It seemed for me a matter of instinct that he should go back — my instinct, I mean.

"Does it occur to you," he asked, "that perhaps she wouldn't have me — even if I were to go back to her a thousand times?"

"I think she would —"

"Well — it wouldn't last."

"Perhaps not." That seemed to me beside the point. "You see," I said, "Valentine is like that!"

"I know it —"

We both kept silence; we might have been a little stunned by the finality we had agreed to. And then Penny, evidently at the end of some thought of his own, "What Valentine is like—" He waited.

We talked of her then as perhaps it might seem strange for us to have talked — he with his prejudice against mention of her magically gone — we matched our memories of her, recalled her own matchless ways. "The way she walked," I said, "and sat and stood — the line she made from head to toe —" I as a dancer knew. Penny thought of her as lounging — leaning back in a big flowered armchair which graced the parlor of the house they had had in Colorado,

knees crossed, eyes bent contemplatively on the perfection of her slippered foot. "She sat as though she were posing for her portrait—" There was this purely pictorial aspect—the most obvious—and then came the speculative field—what did she think about all this time when she looked so lovely? Her thoughts were reflected in her beauty, and yet didn't mark her further—she was changeless in the midst of a mutable world. At thirty she was as she had been at twenty—her beauty heightened, more exquisitely completed, but the usual imprints of suffering or joy were quite absent, as though obliterated by the deeper things that held her, splendors and dreams.

"Is it the future she dreams of," said Penny, "or the past?"

"The past? I don't see how she can, she hasn't any—not for her."

Penny demanded an elucidation, and I welcomed all this talk of Valentine partly for its own sake—the defense it was—and partly for its preventing Penny's talk of nearer matters. "No," I said, "she has no past—and yet she comes out of the past—she dreams of splendors of which you and I know nothing. Can't you see what weak, anemic creatures we must all seem to her—can't you see? She doesn't belong to us at all."

"What does she belong to?" said Penny. He said it gravely — and then: "Did she ever confide to you her great idea?"

I waited, and her husband went on: "She thinks she's never really had a grand passion—she thinks that some day she will—an emperor come to life, a great flaming creature—when she sees him she'll know him, she'll hold to him....

All the rest—myself—every one—we're merely of the moment. She awaits the coming of the king; she hates us all because we are not he."

I admitted that she'd in that honored me by her confidence. "It's an idea," I said, "that all women have. But most of us are not so frank; we accept what comes—"

"So does she!"

"I know — but to most of us there are other things more important — we accept because we don't really care. Me, for instance: I love you, and yet it's possible I might love some one else more. But I don't want to, you fill my need of loving. . . . Valentine really cares. That's what I mean when I say that for her she has no past — for her it hasn't come — her standards are high — "

Penny hardly knew he answered me. "Oh, I know—" "You ought to. And yet you come to me for love!" I made my point.

He looked at me wide. "I come to you — what do you want me to do?"

"I want you to go back to Valentine. I'm trying to persuade you that it would be for you the best thing."

He looked at me and beyond me, and one might have thought his gaze at last had rested on some far-sought object of its quest. "I'm not at all sure what I shall do—"

We went on with the conduct of our lunch.

He finally brought out what was the most important question either of us had asked. "What will happen if her great idea comes true?"

"Comes true —?"

"Yes — if she finds her great man, the one really worthy

of her, why, what then?" I couldn't answer that, and he went on: "What will become of you and me?"

"Nothing, I suppose."

"Oh, yes, there will. She'll chuck me for good and all-she'll ask me to let her divorce me. If I do that —" Penny looked up, "if I do that, will you marry me?"

"You mean if she wants to marry her great man?"

"Yes."

"You mean divorce Simon?"

"Yes."

"I suppose I should — yes."

"Ah — then all I can say is, I hope she does find him! I wouldn't care if he were the devil himself — all her kings and emperors can rise from their graves. . . . Only you must promise me, Rose. You must promise me that if she comes and says, 'I've found my man—go,' and I do as she wishes and set her free, why, there won't be any more weary waiting — you'll marry me the very moment you can."

For a moment I said nothing, and Penny put his hand out across the table to me. "You wouldn't be under any obligation to her then, would you — not if she said that?"

"No — not then. But she won't say it. She told me once that the men she could have loved were all dead — I think it's true —"

"Oh, my Lord Harry!" said her husband.

I admonished him, "I don't think it's a matter for laughter—" and yet I myself was laughing. "They lived thousands of years ago—"

"You make her out quite dreadful!" I protested.

Penny again was grave. "Then, as I've said, I hope they come to life, for then, Rose — then — you'll marry me."

I took his hand that he'd put out to me. "My dear—they won't—she'll never find her man."

"But if she does—?"

"If she does. Yes, I'll marry you then."

XXXIX. HUSBANDS AND WIVES

And of all the strangeness both of speech and of event here recorded — the things which people would say couldn't be — the most strange of all was that Penny immediately took my advice. He obeyed my wish, and went back to his wife. I had left him on the steps of the Savoy — myself going off to attend to a number of business matters — and he must have made his decision then and there, for a few hours later, when I returned to my rooms, I found a note from him. "Rose," he wrote, "I'm going to try my luck in Montreal — I've booked my passage for to-morrow. If you want to see me before I go — if you have any other solution—" He gave me his exact address, the telephone number of his London hotel, exactly when he would be found there.

I turned to Katie, who was sitting by the window with some of her eternal mending. "Katie," I said, "men are easy to get rid of!"

She offered no comment.

Till the morrow every minute and every hour was a separate hazard; every letter that spelled the name of Penny Black's hotel was a brand before my eyes. The other solution was so simple — so clear — so there to my hand; it might be easy to get rid of men, but this one I knew wouldn't be irrecoverable. I wanted him back, and my conviction of right was all the other way. With my brain I wanted him, with my reason I saw no good one why I shouldn't have him; but instinctively I halted and felt I should regret too much.

This instinctive barrier I climbed, looked over the top, descended, and climbed again. How, in the midst of this, I managed to dance I don't know; I don't recollect it in the least; but I remember the night that came after. Valentine herself couldn't have known more of love, couldn't have desired more of it than I; any speech of Penny's — bleak and bare as it might have been — was a blotched shadow in comparison with my thought. But the next day when I sent Katie with a note — partly on the chance of his still being there to receive it, partly to make sure of his departure — and she returned with the news that he had already sailed, all the thought I had been racked by suddenly dropped away. I knew nothing, desired nothing — there was nothing that mattered enough. I remembered my great stress, and could hardly believe myself the same person who had undergone it.

Later I received a postal card depicting Penny's steamer. With smoking funnels and prow cutting the waves at an angle insuring of speed, it was easily capable of bearing him swiftly to the fair arms, the fair hands at which he would beg mercy. And his begging wasn't vain. He wrote me a letter which must have taxed both his courage and his skill. She forgave and he forgave — he described them as together smoking the pipe of peace. They were going West again on some business of his, the little Ha'penny was very anxious to ride cow ponies — before he had been too young for that manly pastime. His father was glad that everything was as it was he wanted to tell me, because he owed it all to me. I was responsible. He was well and happy, and I the possessor of He was forever my slave. infinite wisdom. The great man hadn't yet been found, he wrote — inconsequently I thought.

It might seem that I would have been utterly crushed -

left high and dry — wrecked. I had surely been taken at my word in a manner which had surpassed my fondest expectations, my advice had proved practical beyond anything I might have hoped or feared. I even had the haunting doubt that it was my advice; instead I suspected it — given the failure of certain designs — of having been Penny's own original intention.

Yet I wasn't crushed. I didn't regard the thing as final. I welcomed the respite from tumult, and felt quite sure that tumult would return again. I still loved Penny Black -I missed him and I wanted him — and yet I presented the curious spectacle of a woman who loves without jealousy. Never had I been less jealous. I thought of him and Valentine together without a quiver. I don't know what is usual in these cases, but so it was with me. One can judge only by one's own experience. I heard from Valentine. In New York, in the autumn, I heard again — we continued to keep up a desultory sort of correspondence. I regarded her, as I say, without envy; and myself wrote to her, hardly remembering that my letters might be read by Penny. Her Penny seemed a different one from mine. They were settled in Denver, she confessed to boredom - "I'm all the time waiting for something to happen — I don't suppose you ever feel like that — " I took it that the Blacks were again not on the best of terms. Through the veil which a kind providence had drawn across my memory and my thought of them, I saw how this might be.

In the autumn Simon came to see me. As long as the young man had returned to his lawful spouse, he saw no further reason for my remaining alone. He would wait for me while I saved my dignity, — while I didn't come back to

him too soon, — and then he would be magnanimous. But never had Simon's charms showed for less. I thanked him, and told him I considered myself very well off. If he didn't mind, I would stay so. To that he had no reply, except to point out — as he had done before — that some men would be exceedingly angry. I think all along he rather plumed himself on not being. I couldn't deny that I had treated him cavalierly. He too spoke of divorce — did I wish it? he asked. No — did he? No.

That winter I worked hard, and would have had little time for Simon or Penny or any one else; in fact I was glad I could give my undivided attention to my work. I appeared in repertoire both in New York and Chicago; by arrangement with Daniells I revived "The Harvest of Folly." Mrs. Cassagryer still continued to live with me in Washington Square; she kept the house open when I was away, and insisted upon bearing her share of the costs. I lived simply, and managed to accumulate a considerable surplus to invest with Syms. I helped him to security and he repaid me many times. I reached to a dead level of success, a dead level of calm. I looked coldly upon those things which had at other times concerned me greatly.

And then one morning I awoke to a sense of spring in the air. I fatted my soul on Swinburne's "Chorus," went forth and was extravagant in bonnets, allowed myself to be kissed by a young man whose name I don't at the moment recall. But all that is set down in my book; for that spring I took it up again — I took it up, as I have said, to save my soul alive from youth and spring and kisses. Frankness I spoke of, the ultimate truth laid out stark and staring for my relief. To the horror of Mrs. Cassagryer I digressed to tem-

ples at the edge of deserts — feet that pattered out across the sand. I think my cat, Cerberus, knows more of them than I. . . .

All I said of dancing and my early success interested me then particularly. My accounts of my father made up to me in part for not being with him. He was still West, working now on some new problems, still further improving upon the created order. I missed him, and so I talked of him. Spring turned summer. I commended the quality of Mrs. Cassagryer - endeavored to treat Penny Black with sufficient distance — an admirer of Valentine's. tribute to Colonel Rangely — Barney Grant came next. "We loved in the manner of youth —" I quote — "incompletely — we were young fools — at twenty-eight I say it. . . . Sometimes I feel that we knew more of love than ever I've known since. I sit here now with roses about me, the midsummer town disguised in their fragrance, Cerberus asleep at my elbow, the clock speeding towards the hour of my labors — I think of irrecoverable things...." That was contemporary enough. Then the chapter I have named "The Devil and the Deep Sea" — Simon, I suppose was the devil, and the deep sea lay off Shoreham, a setting and a scene for the loves of the ages. I talked of "Folly"; fresh from my revival of it I was well in a position to do so. I told about receiving a letter from Valentine announcing her marriage, and I remember as I wrote it down how it came to me sharp that the passing of ten years had wrought little change. Ten years before Valentine was living in Denver with her husband — then as now. It gave me a sense of the solidity — the inexorableness — of facts.

I didn't go to London that year, but instead played late in

New York — Syms' theater was especially fitted with devices for keeping it cool — and managed in August to get away to a quiet seacoast. I spent my days out of doors, at the knees of nature, absorbing refreshment from earth and sea and sky; in the evenings I wrote — Mrs. Cassagryer sitting by, usually beguiling her leisure with one or another of the many sorts of solitaire she knew how to play. Reading, she said, was no relaxation to her, and sewing was hard on her eyes. She grew skillful with the pianola which our little rented cottage happened to contain. It reminded me of the old days when I had lived in New York with my father — there had been one then. I had the old music rolls stored away somewhere, and I sent for them; again we reveled in the "Soldiers' Chorus," the intermezzo from "Cavalleria" and the toreador song from "Carmen." Often I wrote to mighty strains. She played Beethoven, too, the murmuring voices of the "Waldstein," and from that to a Brahms concerto — thought in music. I like to think that my work was so influenced. For I wrote of Simon's wooing - I wrote still of "Folly" and driving home through the city and the night, and how I knew then how things would be. I looked ahead to marriage. Interest, I think I said, rather than love. I set down baldly the compliments Simon paid me. I told of my engagement and the new view it gave me, described the day of my wedding, and Valentine lending the occasion grace. . . . One thing I remember — this about Simon — "A full apprehension of his concrete image was confined to certain moments of gazing. He would come before me then — and every line and feature, from the planted feet to the close-shaved sleekness, the delicate hardness which informed the whole, every inch and angle, would stand out

to me as part of something to which I was inextricably bound."

The alternative of this was Simon as an abstract and wholly beneficent power.

My wedding I gave, as I say, and the neighborly interest of people along the block. I told how in the very public glare we made our way to Simon's house. I got as far as that, and then I stopped. For several days I didn't know quite what I should do — then, feeling reckless and having my energies too tightly stored, suddenly I didn't care. I began again, and promised a certain cheerful indiscreteness, all my faith in the locked receptacle to which my finished product would doubtless be consigned. I felt in a light mood, I took a walk through the village, came back to talk of villages in general, the joys of living in the country, the necessity of yowling at the moon. Then, judicially as I might, I dealt with Simon and marriage. I asked at last the eternal question — who am I? — and reviewed my life in answer. Again, judicially — I explained the domestic situation of the Blacks.

I wish I might give rightly the scene of these endeavors: the long, big room, raftered and square; the low, square windows whose curtains were always blowing in the breeze; the staircase at one side, at the other the door with a dark glimpse of the piazza beyond — and over everything the pleasant light of lamps. And Mrs. Cassagryer and I bent to our respective tasks, each of us half encircled by a bright arc — a brightness coming, I hope, not only from near-by lamps but from the harmony of our spirits. The time was all too short.

Purposely I've treated sparingly this year which followed

Penny's London sojourn. I've presented a world without incident or accident — hardly the case. I've passed over the frequent messages I received from Simon, who, I saw by the papers, was scaling the very upper heights of finance — I think these messages would have been more frequent even than they were if he hadn't been so occupied. There were letters, and a brief glimpse or so of my father. He was younger than ever, worked side by side with boys and showed himself more vigorous than they — he hadn't yet seen his goddess. But, in all that, nothing stands out as being of prime importance; I've hurried to more vital issues. The one thing of any importance at all I've purposely left out.

I had sent Penny to his wife, I had made my choice and welcomed the respite from tumult. I had discovered the great truth that Valentine's Penny wasn't mine. At first she and I kept up by letters, then the letters became less frequent; and when I ceased to hear from her altogether my conscience wasn't clear enough for me to write and ask her why. I faced silence. My father let me know that young Black was still in Denver and he supposed his family to be with him — once or twice, at least, he knew he had gone to New York. . . . But if he had, he hadn't let me know.

As summer came I had the strong wish to see him — my memory grew clear again. And mixed with that was a fresh interest; I wanted to see whether he had changed. I was filled with a very compelling curiosity — always a force with me — he would have for me now this added grace of freshness. Would he be the same man, I wondered? — the eyes, the laugh, the gallant head — my emotions circled in a fine imaginative play. For a while I had been at peace, and now following peace came pain. I think then if I had chanced

upon Penny Black,—if the fates had brought us face to face,—it would have lain with him, what use would have been made of our meeting. I loved him, surely, and I hoped that he might still love me, we could give thanks for that, even as he had said.

I looked for him vainly among the vague shadows across the footlights—he wouldn't have changed so as to have become unrecognizable. The terrible silence kept up.

By the sea I have described myself as resting and writing. But I had become proficient enough in the literary art to leave out my present pain from what I wrote. I achieved a remarkably impersonal quality: "I imagine Penny Black himself finding out new profundities of life and love—too deep perhaps for his light measures." I wrote and was forced regretfully to stop. . . .

I went to Paris, danced there, and then for the first time in Berlin, where I made a quite unlooked for success. I stayed abroad all that winter, dancing, and working as I could on my book — I managed a cool analysis of the Blacks and later did the same for Penny and myself. I was about to fill an engagement in London when news was received of the King's death. I had had the distinguished pleasure of knowing the King; on several occasions he had invited me to come to his box, and for him I had broken my usual rule not to appear in private and obeyed the royal summons to Buckingham. His death was the shock that is the death of any one whom we have known, however slightly. My London engagement was canceled — the necessary postponement would have been too long — and Syms found an opening for me in New York. That was in May. a new one — was all prepared, I brought the complete production over and more than redeemed the losses entailed. Simon sent me a congratulatory telegram. "You—" it went, "who turn defeat into victory—"

"And you —" I answered him, "who miraculously know whatever I do. . . ."

XL. THE STILL NIGHT

In my profession it seems to me that the higher one stands in it, the harder one struggles. Syms and I were at the top, and yet it was as if that eminence were merely useful as a point from which to reach heights of labor. I played in May and June, and at the last rehearsed also; as at the end of August I was booked for the road, taking with me four productions - Poupine among others - all of which, with the exception of my current piece, had to be put into shape. From ten o'clock in the morning I worked till after the evening performance, rehearsing all day and playing at night — Saturdays I played twice and rehearsed only in the morning. At odd moments meals were brought in from a neighboring restaurant — bad meals they were too — I compromised on buttermilk. It rained, I remember, it was muggy; and Syms' own theater being otherwise engaged, we weren't there, and hadn't, where we were, his precious cooling equipment. I let in what air I could, however, and heard the company complaining of draughts. Tempers had to be kept under — Mrs. Cassagryer accused me of practicing serenity before the glass — there were worse things than that, I told her. I envied her work which didn't involve constant contact with stupidity.

Syms had found it necessary to engage a number of new girls, and every one of them had to unlearn all they might and begin at the beginning with me. I taught them what I could, knowing full well that they would have six weeks in which to forget it again; but I couldn't rehearse them in midsummer — I owed something to myself. Of course there were stage managers and assistant stage managers who were supposed to act as buffers between me and just that sort of trouble, and while I approved the supposition and had for them all due respect — but why go into that?

The great Syms himself had larger problems, matters of lighting and color and scenery — he had other affairs besides mine; in September he was opening in New York with an extraordinary revival of Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus." It struck me then, as it later proved, an altogether foolish venture; but it increased his reputation for the unusual, and was by that valuable to him. He had grown stout and developed a hitherto unsuspected resemblance to Henry Daniells; he was surer of his aitches, one felt him unmistakably a king in his kingdom. I remember his rushing at me—"Now, Miss Rose, sit down—rest yourself. Why tire yourself all out? They aren't worth it!" His speech attained the dignity of a truth and a command.

It will be seen by all this just how busy I was — just how little time or thought I had for outside things. Mrs. Cassagryer accused me of a dedication almost holy. She said I needed a change, and I pointed out to her how my calling differed from hers inasmuch as that it was in itself a continual change. She was skeptical; I asked her what she would recommend — almost anything, she said. She regretted the passing of him she called the Cherub; she said he filled a need evidently by me not to be filled again.

"Ah — the Cherub and the Cherub's wife! I don't hear from them now; they don't write to me, I don't write to them."

"You don't even write of them —"

- "I haven't time."
- "They're in Denver, aren't they?"
- "I believe they are."
- "And your father, he's in Denver?"

I told her how at the present he was in a place called Leadville — which, I believed, wasn't very far from Denver; he was putting a tunnel through four miles of mountain.

- "And your mother, Rose where is she?"
- "Central America that was the last I heard but why do you ask?"
 - "I don't know you seem so cut off from every one."
 - "It's sometimes better to be cut off —"

Quite often Mrs. Cassagryer would bring up the subject of my mother — she got me to talk about her — I told her all I knew, and how my father continued to support her quite of his own free will. "They came to some agreement that he would pay her so much for so long as she didn't communicate with either of us; though why he really does it is because he wouldn't have her want —"

- "Want what?"
- "Money clothes anything."
- "Doesn't she want you?"
- I had no means of knowing whether she did or not.
- "Don't you want her?"
- "Ah Paula there are so many things I want more!"
- "Yes, I know but apart from those —"
- "You picture her, I suppose, on a snowy night, coming in with a shawl over her head and taking me in her arms?" There always had been something about my mother suggestive of the third act of melodrama. "You picture her, perhaps, in sables sweeping magnificent?"

"No, neither of those. I don't picture her at all. I very much should like to — I should like to see —"

"You mean see her?" I said.

"Why not?"

"Central America's a long way off — Panama, I think, is where she really is."

But my friend had the true Britisher's disregard of distances. "Oh — it's not so bad — I believe you take a steamer to Colon!"

However, it wasn't then that she announced her desire to go there. She kept it till later to tell me she thought it would be a most profitable way for us to spend my coming holiday. She came to me with maps and folders — statistics of all sorts. "I suppose you know your mother's address —" It had reached in her mind as far as that — "Central America — even Panama — is rather a large order —"

As it happened I did — at least I knew the lawyer who would surely have it. "But, Paula, you must be out of your senses — to go there in July — and what then? Does it occur to you my mother might not be at all glad to see us? Turning up on her out of the void — she'd think we were sent by my father — she'd think we had come to spy on her in some way or other."

"What is she doing there, anyway?"

"I don't know."

"Though I'm sure it's a suitable place for an engineer's wife — perhaps she's helping with the canal."

"Perhaps she is."

"She's near there—?"

"I believe so — in Panama — I don't know whether in the city of Panama —"

Mrs. Cassagryer read off from a map the names of likely places: "Paraiso— Emperador — Matachin — La Boca —"

"Somewhere there," I said, "I really haven't any idea — I can find out. But it's impossible for us to go."

And again — "You don't want to go?"

"Not particularly — no. Why not let what is dead and gone be dead and gone? She's probably just as happy without me as she would be with me. You don't understand that we're quite apart, she wouldn't get on with me any more than I should with her — she happens to be my mother, she happens to have brought me into the world. It happens so. I look a little like her — I'm tall and strong and fairly good-looking, she was tall and strong and fairly good-looking—I have, I suppose, certain other of her characteristics. . . . But as for hunting her up — descending upon her in her habit as she lives — why, I can't! It's, as I say, impossible."

"It seems to me I should never be at peace —"

"Why don't you go yourself?"

I think for a time Mrs. Cassagryer very seriously considered it. But we discussed the plan so much and took so long about it that July found us again by our seacoast. I insist that I was right and she was wrong — it wouldn't have done for us to have gone to Panama. Besides, I owed it to my father not to interfere with him — he wouldn't have liked it at all. . . .

I was tired from my season's work, I needed rest, and at the sea I got it. Each day and each night merged itself into the next; I did nothing and consequently now remember nothing. People I avoided, as always. Miss Fanner paid us a visit and wondered greatly at my seclusion. "How you stand it," she said, "I don't see —" Her instincts were continually social. "It isn't as if you hadn't seen things —"

"Seen things?"

"Yes — you've been about — in New York — you've seen what life can be."

"Ah — that's it!"

"That's it—? You mean you're tired—? Well, it's wonderful to be able to settle down; but it seems to me if I lived here moss would grow on my head instead of hair."

She knew I was great — greater than she — and she felt I didn't use the opportunities of greatness. I promised that when next I was in town I would place myself under her guidance. I accepted her invitation to come and stay with her and, incidentally, be shown what contrast was. Again, when she left us, thanking me for my hospitality and assuring me that in spite of things she'd jestingly said she'd enjoyed and appreciated it, she told me not to forget — I was coming to her the very first time I was in town, she herself expected to be there, rehearing, the greater part of August. "Why go to a hotel when you have friends?" Again I thanked her. I had no idea at the time of having it go farther — what Mrs. Cassagryer might do and what I might do were two very different problems. Not that I had anything against my hostess — not that I should be treated in any but a distinguished manner—but in more ways than one Miss Fanner and I were stars who illumined sepa-It would have been impossible. rate heavens. I had faith in the future to absolve me from my promise lightly given. Besides, the future held for me more important difficulties than that. I had word from Syms — he broke it to me that in September I was booked for a week in Denver.

Denver — Denver — I repeated it over. The name barely had sense, I repeated it so often. In fact I wasn't thinking of Miss Fanner at all. And yet because I thought of her so little, and my prospective visit seemed to matter so slightly in comparison with greater things, I found myself — when I came to town — in the very midst of what I had least expected. The thing requires explanation. . . .

I came up — my days filled with affairs and Syms, my attention all divided between my own immediate professional concerns and the magic name I said over to myself. Denver. . . . I stayed at a hotel, as I had planned. As I say, I wasn't thinking of Miss Fenner at all. Finally - my preparations nearly over — the time came by so that I was to start West on the morrow. At first the Pacific coast the future holding to Denver a little longer. I faced a day crowded beyond all hope; I remember being overwhelmed at the number of my tasks at the same time that I was thankful for the way in which they kept the future off. I've always had this capacity for work in the face of crisis; I've found it at once an anæsthetic and a stimulation. one I put my tasks behind me; the people whom I had to see I saw and the errands that I had to do I did. Every hour of the day raced with me and at the end I won. It was a day I don't think I shall ever forget — warm and inclined to be damp; summer fagged, dusty, odorous people pale as ghosts, and the city going on by the force of its own inertia. I felt, curiously, that I myself couldn't have done so much if the rest of the world hadn't been so low. . . .

At last my labors were over and demanded an immediate and material reward. I wanted to sit down quietly, and to

rest, and have at the same time something to eat — I couldn't wait for this until I returned to the hotel. In London — I missed London — it was tea time; I could try to imagine myself there, and I looked about for means of completing my illusion. I didn't find that; but, instead, a tinkling band which gave forth sounds passing for music, and a ceiling of painted firmament — which nevertheless seemed quite as real to me as the dusty sky I had escaped from. It was tea time, but I wanted more substantial fare—I made a sort of meal, jellied bouillon and salad and an ice; I made full use of my leisure. For a consideration, conveyed through my greatly honored waiter, the tinkling band attempted a piece I liked. I was alone, and I remember how I felt a certain stretching sense of comfort in being alone. I leaned back, rested, contented, toyed with my ice, and watched the few scattered specimens who were doing the same thing. It occurred to me, suddenly, what a strange thing it was, — especially for me, — sitting alone in a big Broadway restaurant, feeling myself quite above the unnecessary conspicuousness of my position, and finding in that environment my mood exactly suited. But all things end. I came out, the motor I had had at my call during my stay in town drew up in readiness to receive me. But I told the man I shouldn't need him — I should walk — if I needed him again later, I would let him know.

I had the wish to wander a little — bid a last farewell to the city I after all loved. And yet I didn't look at it; I was self-absorbed, gathering my thoughts; now, in my leisure, I began to look ahead. The tired summer town and the dusk were a background which threw the future brightly into relief, for I felt somehow that after Denver the whole of life would be decided. The present was for the moment over — there was nothing left but that which was to come. The time in between was merely a space for waiting, it wasn't valuable — as my time usually was — what I did with it didn't matter. . . . My mood changed again and I felt utterly, wonderfully irresponsible. I had a little corner of time which was wholly mine to do with as I pleased. I was above the law, like a ship upon the high seas, or a diplomat in a foreign country. And yet, with all this freedom, what was there for me to do? There was Katie waiting for me at my hotel, and on the morrow I was going West.

I had intended to walk through Forty-second Street to Fifth Avenue — my hotel was in this direction — but instead, inadvertently, I had turned up Broadway and walked a number of blocks before it occurred to me to mend my error. I did so then, and that half accomplished, I happened to look up to a name and number — white columns, glass doors — which seemed to me oddly familiar. And then the full association came back to me. I went in and inquired of the clerk at the desk if Miss Fanner was at home. I gave my name — the telephone girl echoed it, Miss Carson to see Miss Fanner, a juxtaposition of just that sort was well worth the telephone girl's while. It seemed Miss Fanner was in and would see Miss Carson. The elevator shot me up to her most cordial greeting.

'But where's your bag — where have you left it?"

"My bag?"

"Yes — with your things — of course you've come to stay? I wasn't at all sure whether you would. I heard that you were in town and as you hadn't looked me up I didn't do anything. Where's Paula?"

I answered that question first. "Paula's in the country—she decided to remain there for another month—and as I didn't really need her care—I have Katie—but I'm not staying with you. I leave to-morrow for the coast."

I paused and Miss Fanner took the opportunity to apologize for her costume, or lack of it—the maid had ushered me direct into an inner room—but she was thinking of dressing, she couldn't decide in what. She was giving a party—I must stay.

"Very well, I'll stay. But I'm leaving in the morning. I have matters to see to, I haven't my things here—"

She stilled my hesitations by indicating the telephone, of which I made somewhat liberal use. I could see that at heart she was surprised by my acceptance. If it hadn't been for the mood I was in, I should have been surprised myself. But my acceptance, and any consequences which might ensue, fell so far short of the possibilities of my mood that the only wonder was that I could be content with what it lay within my hostess's power to offer me. I could be content because there was no one to offer me anything better. I could progress unresistingly—impulsively—my highly developed inhibitions gone weak. I was on the eve of departure, Denver loomed, I was above the law. Viewed by these standards, Miss Fanner's party ran chance of dullness. "I'll stay," I said; "you'll get me back by dawn?"

"Oh — it will be over by dawn! I wish you could have put up with me from the first."

"The thing is accumulative — I see."

Katie brought me clothes and I dressed with some care — my friend professed to admire the result. I told her I felt like a débutante at her first ball.

"You'll feel more like one before you're through." I was very carefully prepared for developments of sorts. There was an atmosphere of expectancy, I gave myself over to it. It was explained how I would meet people I hadn't met before — not, of course, that there was any reason why I shouldn't have done so. "It will be a grand lark — there are one or two people coming whom I don't happen to have met myself — friends of friends. One in particular, a foreigner — most distinguished — a friend of Adelaide's —" Adelaide being herself a friend of Miss Fanner's —" a woman who isn't young, I believe, but most amusing. I don't know a thing about her except that. It isn't my business who she is. . . ."

Perhaps it was true I had never sufficiently taken advantage of my opportunities — a woman near to thirty, a dancer — and yet Miss Fanner's parties, Miss Fanner's friends, were outside the line of my experience. I felt I could give myself to what might come, I could be at once as cool and as diverted as Mrs. Cassagryer at her highest. The party in question had been postponed and postponed, for one reason or another, until at last it seemed a fate that it should never take place at all. The people who were to make it up weren't at the same time available; Miss Fanner herself had been away — then otherwise engaged — everything had happened to prevent it. But these difficulties had smoothed themselves away, and besides, Miss Fanner had the chance of procuring in addition to her own a connecting apartment temporarily vacated. It was a concatenation of circumstances. And now, finally, I had come. I could see my hostess was uncertain whether this last would make or mar. . . . I went in with her to the

spreading of the feast and was overawed by the pinkness and number of the candle shades.

She and her friend, Adelaide, communicated with each other, and in so far as I could gather Adelaide received the news of my presence with astonishment.

People began to assemble in the little reception room. It wasn't the same little reception room where I myself had been received years before, and where I had noted the pictured chintz and been inspired thereby to parrots; but it had to that very marked similarities. There still were heartshaped frames. And was it still "Always" —? Cushions hadn't decreased in their profusion, polishes were quite as high, and a new and further luxury was provided by rugs set catercornered to each other and to everything else. People assembled, I say, and before I followed my hostess to greet them I had a moment of horrible uncertainty — worse than stage fright — I would have given a great deal not to have let myself in for it. Also I was humble — "Don't let me spoil your fun" I wanted to tell them — but I was aware the time for retractions was past. I summoned all the bravery I had, and I think was successful in producing my effect. Trixie Fanner was a pal of mine, a sister in art and a friend, why shouldn't I share with her her revels? My sort of vagabond carelessness had given way to an extreme self-consciousness, but as the evening wore that too gave way. All through moments of keen enjoyment alternated with moments of keen boredom, and then a sense that I mustn't show either my boredom or my enjoyment too plainly.

I remember it late — very late, as it had begun so early — it was a longer entertainment than I was in the habit of

attending, and with insufficient reason for its length. But that, on the whole, was the most damning thing about it. My taste was at times offended, my ethical standards were at no time infringed. I had seen deeper currents - half concealed — at occasions I had graced in the company of Simon. Mrs. Cassagryer was right, it wasn't the apotheosis of the flesh — or for that the apotheosis of anything — I agreed with her there, even though I didn't, as she did, find refreshment of spirit. To me the thing lacked reality. I remembered the Café Marin and wondered if the difference I remembered was the difference in me; I remembered when I had danced for the Lord of War. I felt that I had more of what is called a past than any woman there. They were very simple about themselves; in certain ways one gathered that they might be unconventional, but they took it as a matter of course, it didn't weigh them heavy. To me, who had known Valentine and had known my mother, the present company were shadows. Some of them I already knew professionally, and their professional insignificance was now elucidated. Individually insignificant, in the mass they gave an effect, an atmosphere. There was a relaxation — indefinable — personalities merged; glow, which was not merely a matter of shaded electricity.

But at last they were gone, and in leaving left behind them a greater aspect of revelry than any they had attained in staying. Their absence showed it up as their presence never could have done—every contrast and every mark. I remember the scent of stale wine and stale tobacco, stains, disorders, broken glass surprised upon the mantel, sheets of music still scattered where one of the men in passing had swept them from the piano top; and as a setting for this, the formal impersonal salon of the apartment lately vacated—its chairs, brocaded and spindle-legged, its walls of striped silk, and its windows, ornately laced. It was the sharpest, highest note Miss Fanner's guests had struck, the one they left behind them. Individually insignificant, I have said, and the only one among them who might not have been so had unaccountably at the last moment refused to come.

That was the foreigner — not young, by any means, but atoning for her years — the friend of Adelaide's. After all, it seemed she wasn't foreign, but American, a Mrs. Durgan, who lived in Panama — to the which she was shortly to return. There was much talk of her, and it was conceded her absence was an irredeemable loss. One of the men, who had constituted himself my particular cavalier and who preferred, he said, to sit a little apart — with me, if he might and watch the mice run about, confided in my private ear that she might have gone far towards leavening the lump. But she was ever one to do as she pleased, my informer told me, probably by virtue of her gray hairs. For she wasn't young, and she made no pretense of being anything she wasn't. She was impressive and gray, and for the most part silent, but if you could break her silence, you were well repaid your pains. She had ambiguous eyes, eyes that lived in a face otherwise still.

- "You know her?" I had asked.
- "I have met her Mrs. Durgan, a remarkable woman. . . ."
 - "She has a history —?"
- "Ah my dear lady not a history. A mystery."
 Her analyst was inclined to epigram.

There were epigrams which I myself might have made,

and from which I refrained. There was one fact, one coincidence, I withheld from the general sum of information. I too knew Mrs. Durgan. I knew her better, I think, than any of the well-intentioned people who, tried to bring her before me. I ought to have known her, considering the fact that she was my mother.

For Durgan had been my mother's maiden name, and the one which, with prefix put before, I knew she now used as hers. It was hardly likely there were two Mrs. Durgans living in Panama, of like age and temperament and mystery. But to make it sure I had learned how her friend had told her of my expected presence, and how it was after that she had made her late excuses.

I held my fact selfishly secret. It was all I could compass to realize it myself. There in the still night — the night which seemed to me filled with it — there in the rose glow, I grappled it. And going on about me were revels in which it was clear that I myself was taking part. In the morning I was bound West and soon she was bound South. It was better, perhaps, that we both should go our ways, go undisturbed, yet knowing how close our ways had run. In refusing to meet me she had shown a wisdom and a greatness and a lack of petty curiosity which I could do no less than follow.

In the morning I shot away to the Pacific coast. I played for two weeks in San Francisco, the fact of my mother behind me and the fact of Denver ahead of me and my own great success directly beneath my feet. I had never been to San Francisco before — I had intended to go and they had chosen an earthquake instead; but now it was made up to me for the delay. I was invited to dance in the

open air theater at Oakland, tried that interesting experiment, returned to the larger city and might have stayed indefinitely if my bookings had permitted. But it was decreed I should be in Denver. I arrived there in the morning with a day of work before me; again my father came to see me—this time making the journey from Lead-ville—he met my train and drove with me to my hotel in order that we should be together as much as possible. He had written me that he had much to tell me, — probably news of my mother's visit to New York, which I too was keeping for him. The usual affectionate greetings were first exchanged between us. "You're looking well, father—"

"And you -"

"I'm tired —"

"Ah, it's because you work so hard. Hard work — there's nothing like it — but let me tell you, Rosie, that I'm proud of you!"

"And I'm proud of you, father."

In the carriage he pressed my hand. "You'll never be anything else?"

"Never!" I laughed. He wasn't himself. His eyes were restless. The news he had of my mother had struck him deep. I waited. But his news, when it came, was not what I had thought.

"Rosie," he said, and pressed my hand close, "Rosie, I've seen my goddess."

XLI. NECTAR AND AMBROSIA

ALL along I must have made it only too clear that I am a dancer, not a writer. I have not the writer's subtilty either in expression or in happy intuitive knowledge of my fellows—least of all do I claim for myself those powers usually called psychic. I don't believe in that sort of thing—I touch the earth too close. And yet more than once I've had sudden unexplained insights, queer realizations of things I couldn't possibly have known, clairvoyance I've called it—hardly knowing what the word means. My father said he'd seen his goddess. It was quite as though I had seen her too.

"Valentine," I answered him, and made myself a reality—roots and all—from something which a moment before hadn't existed for me.

"By Jove — yes!"

I listened to the voice of common sense. "But you and she have known each other for a long time — you're old friends —"

"Of course we are."

"Well—?" I said, and waited.

"Well. . . . Two people," said my father — and here I set down his talk exactly as it was — "two people, they might know each other for years without knowing. . . . I remember her as a little tot up at Barrington — she remembers me — I saw her at your wedding, talked to her. It wasn't the same thing."

"Ah -it couldn't have been!"

"I don't think I realized who she was in that way till afterwards."

"You were so taken up with her as a goddess —?"

"Yes — I'd seen her — seen my goddess. It makes me wish I was young," said my father. And then—"I am young." He waited, as though I might deny it.

He went on, "She was a child—a friend of yours." He looked up at me. "Her being that wasn't anything! I asked her afterwards—it was the first thing I said to her—'You're Valentine Black, aren't you, Rose's friend?' She said, 'I believe I am!' She didn't seem to give a damn who she was."

I quote, as I say, word for word. What was told me may be undecipherable — it was so to me at the time — but what I might make of it would be equally so and without the advantage of verisimilitude. Comment of mine would be impossible — I made little then, merely putting questions I couldn't do without. I asked if it was all as he had planned.

"As I had planned —?"

"Yes. Did she come to meet you out of the hills? Come straight towards you, laughing?"

"She did - straight towards me."

My father looked at me full, and there was nothing for me to do but to credit him. I pressed him to his story.

"Where I am now, near Leadville, it's very much like where I was before—jagged hills and cuts and a little shack where I do most of my work. I'm not there all the time, but when I am—"

Again I pressed him.

"I'm coming to that." He came abruptly. "I had some

drawings spread out on the table before me; I was looking at them and I looked up — I don't know why — and through the window, and there she was!"

I myself looked about at the rather commonplace, distinctively modern, distinctively un-Olympian furniture provided by the Brown Palace Hotel—I was reassured of sanity. "Yes," I said, "of course—there she was!"

"Yes," said my father, relating fact off-handedly.

"Did she see you?"

"She didn't see me till I opened the door for her."

"Did she know you for her great man?"

"The man she's waited for all her life? I think she did. . . ."

My father himself waited. Then — "She stood very still and looked at me. She was flushed from walking, but as she stood there she went white — whiter than I'd ever imagined anything — and her hair was a fire about her face. I'd never thought that any woman could be so tall; her eyes looked straight into mine. And then up and down. You must figure us both as looking each other over — the way you'd look — I can't explain! — look at something you didn't intend to forget. Then she bent her head forward as though she were through — as though she'd seen enough —"

"Did you speak?"

"I forget. I took her in my arms. I say, I'd never thought that any woman could be so tall. I don't think I ever kissed any other woman before—"

So it remains with me, the picture of that meeting, painted in short disconnected sentences — words here and there which either shed a glaring light or fold in blackness. I some-

times think my father didn't tell me the truth about it, that it couldn't have been as he said — to open the door to his goddess, look at her and take her to his embrace without preamble — it isn't the sort of thing which happens. Not in this twentieth century. . . . There was something about a dog of Valentine's. She had lost him and been trying to find him and he turned up at last, yelping; he had been on the trail of a badger and his nose was muddy from digging. They shared their dinner with him. It hadn't been apparent up to then that there had been a dinner. It seems my father had prepared something over the alcohol stove he kept to boil coffee in case of emergencies. I suggested that one of his assistants might have come in and it might have been embarrassing for every one if he had been discovered entertaining a lady — it wouldn't have been generally known she was a goddess. He agreed that might very easily have happened nothing likelier. I saw it was a time when the ordinary embarrassments would count for little. . . .

Visions I conjured. Filled with them I attended to the affairs of the day. I had reason to use the telephone directory and came upon the name of Pennington Black inscribed there. I had a sense that everything was going on at once. I was powerless to steam the tide. I telephoned to Valentine. She was away — I might have thought — and then asked for her husband, who was out; I left my name and might as well have left my very self. I felt served up to the mercy of an uncertain providence. Nothing I could do would matter — I was powerless — and yet futilely I spent myself; I questioned my father.

Valentine was staying with her father-in-law, the elder Black. He had a ranch not far from Leadville, he was

attending to some interests there and — by the way — the famous quarrel was at an end. Black had thrown up his hands and declared himself conquered — the two men were friends. I asked about the other quarrel; wasn't it true, I said, that Valentine didn't get on with her husband? My father said it was, and pointed his affirmation with an oath. What was going to be done —? I asked, not so much for any concern it was of mine, as I did so to bring down to the level of the commonplace the whole extraordinary situation; nectar was a heady tipple, I preferred ale. All that day there was the necessary business I had to see to, and side by side with that went on my conversation with my father. What I said — what we either of us said — wasn't, as always, in any way adequate to our subject, didn't begin to represent our state of disarray.

Yet I must have had a kind of calm. I remember answering brightly the newspaper men who asked me questions about matters quite other. I remember explaining to the local manager that I couldn't possibly make use of the dressing-room with which he had provided me. It was spacious, I knew, everything it should be, but I was in the habit of being nearer the stage — something must be done and done at once! Something was. A trunk had gone astray containing one of the gowns I had expected to wear that night in Poupine. I had to make other arrangements.

I opened with Poupine, and fed the great maw of the press with reasons for my choice, — I wished to give Denver my best, in the past they had been good to me, if it was within my too humble power I should repay them. . . .

I seized a moment of seclusion with my father. "How long," I asked him, "has this been going on?"

"You mean Valentine and me?"

"Yes — how long since you looked up and saw her?"

"A week — a month,— how can I tell? Those things don't go by schedule, Rose."

As I say, I asked what was going to be done. It wasn't at all plain. There would be, he supposed, a new deal; "Reshuffle the cards — start the game again — only you can't start the game again —" It seemed there was a woman.

"What woman?"

My father didn't know. She was some one with whom Valentine's husband was supposed to be in love.

Mechanically I asked a further question. But Valentine herself had denied all knowledge of who she was.

"I think, however—" Confidence was waxed to—"I think she was lying to me. I think she knows quite well. But what difference does it make to me who she is? If it makes things any easier for us—you see it's all a happy mess!"

I admitted it that. "If Penny Black wishes to get rid of his wife — for any reason or any woman whatsoever — why, the way is cleared?"

"Yes, isn't it?"

"Yes—quite cleared," I said. "It reminds me of the song—don't you know—the music hall ditty? 'I'm on my way to Reno—to Reno—'" I broke into it gayly. "You see, I know all about Reno—I came through there on my way here!"

My father studied me. "Reno being the place where they get the divorces? I suppose you figure us as moving there, bag and baggage. I'm glad the prospect amuses you. But you see you don't have to go — you're out of it —"

The telephone rang. Having answered it, I turned: "Speaking of angels! Penny Black's downstairs—he's coming up."

"Then I'll go."

"Of course you wouldn't want to see him --"

"I think I can get on without it. But what's he doing here?"

"I don't know yet. He and I are old friends; I suppose he's come to call."

My father picked up his hat. "You better go in and cut out the lady he's supposed to be in love with."

"Perhaps I shall — going in, as you say, I shouldn't be so out of it."

"Exactly! I'll come and take you to the theater —"

"Splendid — don't be late —"

"I shan't!" My lips brushed his — "Good-by —"

"Good-by —"

My father opened the door to admit his own departure and found himself at the same time admitting his enemy. The two men bowed, and the elder passed out in the wake of the bell-boy who had escorted the newcomer.

"Ah —" said Penny, "the coming of the king."

"Yes."

"The king." He repeated. "So you've heard —?"

"Yes."

I couldn't get beyond the monosyllable. And then—"I shall have to begin—over again. . . ."

I didn't know what it was I said, all I knew was that a stranger was there in the room with me, and that this stranger was — yet obviously — Penny Black. He hadn't altered in any striking way, — any way which would have made his identity uncertain; he hadn't grown suddenly old or gray or fat,

he hadn't changed the color of his eyes. The change which had worked in him wasn't a matter of these things at all; it was subtle and deep — the very inner being of the man himself. To me he was a stranger, and yet, there he was, Penny Black. The past had claims — I found time to wonder what might become of them. There was nothing I could do — I felt that — I made of myself a limp sacrifice to fate. I was afraid — afraid as a philosopher might be who, bound to a rail, awaits the coming of the engine which is to destroy him, and still has power to speculate upon the hereafter. Bound — benumbed — I speculated. I could do that in spite of all that had happened, for so much had happened my capacity for realization was overtaxed.

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"Well, Penny?"
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I don't know which it was held me most, the Penny I knew or the Penny I didn't; they both were there—doubly I was held. It was what I wished to prevent his finding out — how much held I was. I said the obvious, taking refuge so. "You've changed—"

I still made play at regarding him abstractly: "You've lost your precious innocence. Your sins have discovered you — every precious one of them — they've come to the surface. And yet it's not of the surface — the change in you. You've lost. You've gained —"

[&]quot;Well, Rose?" He paused — "What now?"

[&]quot;I wish I knew."

[&]quot;Yes, I know it. I've gone to the devil."

[&]quot;I thought you went to Valentine."

[&]quot;I did."

[&]quot;You don't call her the devil —?"

[&]quot;No, indeed. . . ."

"Have I gained you?" he said. He turned. "Tell me-have I gained you?"

I say, it was a Penny I didn't know.

"You forget I haven't seen you for more than two years!"

"I don't forget anything. You can't say I haven't waited.

No — you can't say I haven't waited — " He seemed to find force in repetition.

"I don't want to say it! I don't want to say anything." I sat down, and with all the grace I could summon motioned him to do likewise. "Tell me about yourself — it's been so long — it's what I feel, we must begin at the beginning."

"Anywhere you please. But everything about me can be told so soon." He put it in a single phrase — he'd been a fool.

"Things you've done —?"

"No — things I haven't!"

"Ah — that's always the way. It's what we all must feel — how little we've done — how little we've made of ourselves!"

"I don't know whether the things I haven't done would—
if I'd done them—have made more of me," said Penny.

"Then you're as well off, aren't you?"

"No. I'm not." He looked at me. "But I'm not a fool now." He spoke with the exaggerated force of a person knowing themselves weak. "I've learned!"

"And you've come here now," I said, "to tell me what you've learned?"

"Yes — if you'll let me."

My speech pressed him even as my volition held him back. "Well?"

But the old things, what he'd learned proved to be trite and worn: we have only one life to lead—the time for leading it is now — we must take the cash, leaving credit, the Dust was ahead of us, the Dust behind. . . . To himself he was eloquent. I explained, in reference to another sort of dust, that it was largely of his own raising.

- "Oh, I've raised —" he said, and stopped.
- "Yes, I suppose you have."
- "But what else was there to do? Oh I'm not excusing myself I was a fool. . . . A fool years ago to hang about after you the way I did without ever taking matters into my own hands —"

"Yes, Simon said that. He said it was the chief thing he knew against you."

Simon's supplanter glared. "And what had it to do with him?" He went down the list: "I was one not to take a stand with my wife — to let her play the deuce and never seem to particularly mind. I've been overridden by women all my life — they've used me as they would their pet cat, they've stroked my fur and fed me cream and stepped on me. And I've had a rotten good opinion of myself with women just because they've picked me instead of the next one. I could grin at the other fellow just because I could get for the crooking of my finger what he had to work hard for. I sometimes wonder if he wasn't grinning at me. . . . And what good has it all been? I took Valentine because I wanted her — I beckoned and she came like a lamb to the slaughter — but, you know, I think it was she who slaughtered me? You I found, I wanted —"

"You never took me --"

"No, I didn't. I got to care about you a lot — I cared too much — there was always something slippery about you. I think it was my fault — I myself, the real me as it were, never

could quite come up to your imagination of me. You were worse than Valentine — you expected a god and you wouldn't accept anything less. Oh — I'm not excusing myself, I say — I know what I was!"

It was after this that at length he apologized, vindicated some other of the uses he had or hadn't made of the past two years; again — what else was there? — it would be for me now to save him. Valentine, racketing about with her god, it wasn't for her to save him, surely. . . .

I had from him a fresh rendering of the celestial wooing. He had gone to Leadville to confer with his father on a point of business, his wife a quite secondary consideration, and had found himself in the midst of it. He told me he knew as soon as he saw Valentine. She looked as if she were looking at the sun and yet wasn't blinded. . . .

To me, standing apart and hearing of all this, Penny's figure of speech brought the thing more vivid than any direct narration of my father's.

Penny managed at last to be particularly illuminative: "She likes 'em ripe, doesn't she?"

"You speak as if there were more than one — don't make it out worse —"

"I can't believe it!"

"I can."

Then he contradicted himself flat. "Oh — so can I!" Then, irrelevantly — "They're the same color."

"Is that why they love each other?"

"I don't know - do they love each other?"

"What else—?" There couldn't be anything else, of course. I felt in a measure responsible. "My own father—"

"It's too bad, Rose, if you're responsible for all the little indiscretions of your father."

"I feel as if I were responsible for everything!"

"Well, you're not."

Penny stayed on, and I had something to eat sent up. He wouldn't join me in that, but permitted me to order him a cocktail. He had two of them, thirstily tossing them off. "Don't you ever drink?" he asked.

"No."

"Nor smoke?"

"No."

"Good Lord! What do you do?" His questions were in the form of a complaint. I hadn't changed, but by the change in him I fell short. "You're not human," he said.

It was as if to refute his own accusation that he set his second glass on the mantel, his cigarette with it, and thus unimpeded, came over to where I was sitting, leaned down, and kissed me. He stood back of me, I remember, and had to turn my face about to his. He wasn't deterred by Katie becoming suddenly audible in the next room. There was a trace at last of the old Penny — less of the new — something pathetic and young; he sat down beside me and leaned his cheek against mine. "Rose, I'm tired. Pet me." And the curious thing was that I loved him as much as ever I had. I wouldn't have complied with any other man's similar request. I ate as I could, and was reminded of that other meal we had had alone together once when I was passing through New York on my way to London.

Time went quickly. My father was announced. Again the two men bowed, and there was nothing for Penny to do but leave.

My father's gaze followed him as the door shut. "What's he been doing here all this time?"

"Talking. He's an old friend."

"Yes, but even if he is. . . . Don't you usually lie down at six o'clock?"

"Yes, usually I do."

"Well, isn't it rather abusing the privileges of even an old friend to cut you out of your rest? Why didn't you tell him to go?"

"You see, father, I'm the woman with whom he's supposed to be in love. I made him a promise years ago, that when Valentine found her great man I would take her place. Well — she's found you!"

"You take Valentine's place?"

"Is it so preposterous?"

"I didn't mean it like that —"

"You see," I said, "I'm not so out of it as you think."

"I see you're not. What is it you intend to do? What, exactly, do you mean by 'taking Valentine's place'?"

"I don't know exactly what I mean. What Penny means is that I should get divorced from my husband — marry him — reshuffle the cards, as you say."

"Did he come to-day to hold you to your promise?"

"I don't know; we didn't talk of that."

"What did you talk of?"

I was vague.

"Well, will you marry him?"

"Will you marry Valentine?"

"Yes — of course."

"But how can you when she's already married?"

"There'd be preliminaries—"

"She'd divorce Penny? But if Penny didn't want to be divorced?"

"She could do it, you know, in spite of what he might want."

"I suppose you know at whose expense?"

"No; whose?"

"Mine. Penny and I went over all that years ago—things wouldn't be true, but nevertheless they'd be thought, they'd be said." My father's comprehension seemed dulled and I was forced to be still more clear—I gave the legal term for the thing I should be called, he surely ought to know. . . .

His attention had been focused on a flower in the carpet, his comprehension had seemed dulled as I say — we both might, for that, have been discussing other affairs than our own; he hadn't shown surprise at much which should have surprised him exceedingly, and I had announced cataclysmic facts unquivering — but now he turned. "Corespondent — no, it isn't pretty. So it seems I should marry Valentine over your dead body, Rose. That is, unless her husband consents — which he would hardly do unless he had you as a reward."

He had understood more than I thought. "Exactly!"

He went back: "So that was why you left Simon? I might have known. . . . Rosie," he said at last, "I've always wondered about you — you seemed so good I was afraid you'd die young." And with that extraordinary fear expressed, he took me to the arms which must, not so very long ago, have held Valentine.

I leaned away from him. "I am what you call good."

"Oh — Rosie — what I call good!"

There was nothing to be said in the face of that. "So you don't mind?"

"Mind that my own daughter has blood in her veins instead of ice? Why, Rosie, I'm glad. I thought you weren't that sort — and you're not. And yet you are. . . . Why shouldn't I be glad? You know I couldn't forgive Penny Black if it were any one else. But as it's you — the insult to Valentine is less — why, it wouldn't be in my heart to blame him!"

I felt the firm earth falling away from beneath my feet. I braced my hands to my father's shoulders — was he my father? More so then than ever, he thought; he welcomed me to the fold, he found me for his delight his own true child. And more than all, my undeniable superiorities served to save the woman he loved from too great insult. His path was made suddenly clear. Mine seemed not to exist at all. Unwashed by tears my eyes burned, their intentness would have discovered whatever path was there, but instead they only found Penny's empty glasses on the mantel and his burnt-out cigarette and next to that the little leather-cased clock which ticked me warning of the hour. "Come," I said, "Poupine will be late."

"We mustn't forget her!" said my father.

"Indeed we mustn't. For after all," and I found I could laugh, "she's the most important person in Denver to-night."

"Ah — Rosie — I said I was proud of you. . . ."

XLII. LITTLE DUCKS

ALL this talk. . . . That's what I most remember of this extraordinary week. Things happened too close upon each other to be separately framed. I remember talk insufficient cover, insufficient explanation, for all that occurred — and the sense I had all the time of having sunk very low indeed. "Three little ducks," Penny Black had said, "paddling about in a mud puddle all together." It seemed we were any number of little ducks and every flap of our wings spattered our native element—we might, instead, have soared heavenward. There were those two aspects; below the puddle and above the sky, beasts and gods, scandal and divine love. For the divinity was there side by side with the sneer — I saw it with my own eyes, saw Valentine when she came up from Leadville ostensibly to see me. She was pale as she always was under stress her beauty curiously ennobled. She looked at the sun and yet wasn't blinded, she looked at the sun and the moon and the stars together — and on to fresh heavens beyond — her velvet eyes held the reflection of glories. She was herself glorious, and in this — the greatest of all her transgressions — she was no longer false. She was transfigured — explained — the perfection of her type, I once have said, but now her type was carried to its ultimate conclusion. came out as I had never imagined she could do. She was the one of us all who was the least bespattered.

"My dear," I said, "if we could all be like you! . . ."

It was the answer to every argument and every vindication. She no longer denied all knowledge of my identity—she had lied to my father in telling him that she didn't know who the woman was who alone could solve their difficulties, and now it was part of her magnificence that she made no bones about having lied—she knew perfectly it was I with whom Penny was in love. Well—he could have me—she would sacrifice herself—he could say anything about her he liked, in court or out of it, so long as he set her free. But he wouldn't go through with it without reward,—she reminded me of a promise I had made of which Penny had informed her. "You see, I've found my great man, you've got to marry my husband now."

I reminded her that I, too, had a husband of my own. She regarded that circumstance as unimportant. She was, I say, extraordinary — and then my reply — "If we could all be like you!"

She took her tribute. "You've never understood me before."

"You lift the situation away from the ordinary standards by which such things are judged," I said.

This talk took place in my sitting room at the hotel, the same which had harbored all the rest—all the rest with which in the watches of the night the little walls must have still echoed. The ugly hotel chairs must still have felt the press of their successive occupants. . . .

But it was high noon now, and my visitor didn't spend all her time seated; she wandered about, evidently feeling the limitations of the space provided her. She looked out through the windows, then back at me, came always with surprise both in gaze and step to the confines of the room. But that was by the way — she was really intent upon her errand, and her errand was to bend me to her will. I had never seen her so intent; she had always been a rather lazy person, letting things slip when things were hard, but her love had changed her. All the old appraisals were worthless; she was strange to me almost as Penny had been strange.

She stood before me. "Tell me one thing—"
"What—?"

"Is it that you think Penny not worth your while, not worth the trouble of claiming? Because you're wrong, Rose. . . ." She talked of Penny to me very much as I had once talked of her to him. Again, it was a queer scene we had — she urging upon me the manifold virtues of her spouse and admitting at the same time that she might hardly seem the one so to do.

"And yet," she said, "it's only since your father that I've really appreciated Penny. I don't mean I miss him—not that; but it's made me understand. I see how far he is above every one else—as far as your father is above him. Oh, I know he's changed—I know he's what you call 'damaged.' He's behaved badly—well, we all have."

"All --?"

"Yes. You don't think you're the little immaculate exception, do you? You've behaved abominably—to Penny." Valentine bent her gaze to some thought of her own. "Women like you always do. Oh, yes—we've all behaved badly, according to our lights. I've behaved badly myself. He came back to me—I took him back—we got on and yet I'd tired of him. You don't know what that is, do you?—tired, so that you'd take up with the first

tramp you met on the road, just to get away. . . . Well—he wanted to show me that he'd tired of me. He hasn't kept his faith with you or with me or any one else. But that doesn't take away. He's thirty-six—he doesn't look it, not a day over thirty—it's a funny question for me to bring up, considering the age of your father. But that's a different thing altogether. Ten good years, years of youth, Rose, think of that! I've had my youth—but you—you've been so good. When I said you'd behaved abominably I didn't mean you hadn't been. I believe you have been good."

"And now you're offering me a chance to be bad?"

"No, no! Isn't it what you want — Penny, I mean? And if I don't mind. . . . I want you to promise me what you've already promised him — take him and be happy. Then we'll all begin at the beginning —"

It came knocking at my consciousness that this was the gift I had waited for so long; yet what I said in answer wasn't acceptance or thanks, but was part of the old instinctive denial I knew so well: "Of course I want him—ten years of youth you think he has for me—all the rest. But it's impossible—it's horrible."

"Horrible?" Valentine questioned.

"Not for you — no." I was harsh. "That's the difference between you and me. Don't you know what you're doing? You're trying to sell me your husband in exchange for my father."

Valentine smiled sidewise. "You speak as if we were at a horse trade and you weren't satisfied with your bargain. But it's perfectly true, I'd sell anything I had to get what I want — why not?"

I was ignoble. "You ask the sanction of the law — why? Things aren't horrible to you."

"That's neither here nor there. . . . Oh, don't you see I want to be bound? The law — God in heaven — whatever there is — I want it all. My own arms aren't enough."

"Haven't they been enough —?"

She didn't answer me. "My little loves — I don't regret those — they've kept me alive as the gardener's watering pot keeps plants alive that are waiting for the rain."

It was a picturesque figure. "But people can't live so," I said; "they can't do as they please. There are decencies to be preserved — conventions — moralities — laws —"

- "And isn't it laws that I'm preserving?"
- "Yes but not for their own sake merely as an added feather in the cap of your desire. You don't care the snap of your finger for any laws except the ones you make yourself!"
 - "And who are you to talk of such things?"
 - "Why shouldn't I?"
- "Why should you? You who dance half naked. It's what Penny used to say, years ago, before we were married, when I knew him in New York and knew you. He said you weren't a person for me to know you, with a back as bare as his hand —"
 - "What did you say to that?"
- "Oh I suppose I defended you! I explained to him that it was very much barer. I noticed his hand was all covered with little fine hairs, and I pointed out to him that your back was as smooth and as polished as the marble columns on the stage."

"Good for you! But in your heart of hearts you agreed with him?"

- "Not then now. I say it takes away your right to talk."
- "Not at all it gives it to me."
- "Yes I know. You with your blessed innocence can waive the question of backs altogether and be acclaimed by the most high. I could do the exact same thing and be mobbed. Art, you call it, you keep the purity of your soul. Damn the purity of your soul!"
- "As much as you please. It's surely mine to damn, or to keep though it's not for that the difference between us doesn't lie there; I don't hold myself up as being so much better, or, as you say, purer perhaps I'm less so. You say if you danced as I do you'd be mobbed. I might, if I would, in certain ways return the compliment, strike out the dancing —"
 - "Yes I know —"
- "It's a difference. . . . I'm in the mud; you're not— I don't know why—not now. You're quite transfigured, quite splendid. Oh—I don't set myself above you! But for me, it's a bargain I couldn't make, even to complete your joy."
- "To complete your own!" It was that she held me to—I should have Penny for my very own, and Penny—even as he was—was worth the having. Relentlessly she reminded me of his charms. "Other men make demands," she said.
 - "It's not a question of other men."
- "Of course it isn't but Penny he interferes less with whatever one may happen to be doing it didn't matter so much for me, as I never happen to be doing anything. But for you, your dancing and all that " She gave, too, some of her husband's less negative qualities. It was as well, for never had these qualities left me so cold.

I asked her if all this wasn't a matter between herself and Penny? She could put it to him and he surely wouldn't wish to keep her against her will. Besides, how could he? If she wished to leave him — to divorce him — there were no laws, certainly none in Colorado, which could stop her.

- "We've condoned each other's sins so often," Valentine explained.
- "Penny told me once in London that you would have no grounds for divorce."
 - "Ah that's what he meant!"
- "But in Colorado there are plenty of grounds besides sins —"
- "Indeed, yes. But suppose he defended his case suppose he brought a counter-suit I should look well, shouldn't I, before we were through?"
- "That's exactly what he once said to me about myself. He said if he were to divorce you and you should bring a counter-suit, why, I should look well. But I thought you said you wouldn't mind the scandal so long as he set you free however well you looked, it wouldn't matter to you."
- "I wouldn't mind. But if he brought up things about me, I could bring up things about him, you know. Oh—I don't doubt that eventually we'd both find ourselves free—free as air. But it wouldn't be pretty. I ask you, Rose, to save us—save me, save him—if you care about us at all. Save yourself." Valentine had made her plea.

She had made it so well I felt towards her a new respect. I was right — all the old appraisals of her were worthless. I tried to figure out both old and new — I sparred for space to think — I should have need of all the thought I had.

"So I'm the price of peace?" I said at last.

"You seem to be."

"Did he tell you that, and send you here to tell me?"

"I'm here—never mind who sent me. It was like this: I saw Penny this morning, I came up on the night train by way of the Springs, and I had intended to see you from the first, but he speeded me on. He thought I might be able to put things in a light—two women talking together—things can be said between them."

It was a point of view I hadn't thought of. Frankness between women was so rare. . . .

Valentine looked up. "Yes—isn't it? I'm afraid I don't understand women very well, I've known so few of them. I don't like most women, I somehow shouldn't want them to have Penny—but somehow you're different."

"Yes," I said, "you all agree to that. Objections which would be final if I were any one else disappear before the fact of my being who I am. But I thought you thought I had treated him badly—?"

"So I do — women like you don't know —" She cut herself short. "But that's apart from what we're saying."

"You'd trust me with him now?"

"Indeed I would! I'd be sure he'd be in good hands—you'd take care of him!"

That also was a new view. "You'd trust me to see that he wore his rubbers and didn't put aside his flannels too early—?"

She wasn't listening. "Oh, you'd make him a good wife — better than I ever made him." Something of her old inconsequence was in the laugh she gave. "Fancy you and Penny!"

I still could match her. "Yes — fancy!" Indefinably, the spirit of our quarrel was broken. I looked at her — s

pleasing act — and at last, as my gaze passed her, I looked at the ever present little clock. It brought me to a solution.

"Won't you lunch with me?" I said.

She hesitated.

"Please do. They have a new palm room downstairs they're rather proud about. I haven't seen it. Wait—I'll put on a hat."

She followed me into my room. "You always have such perfect hats. Do you still go to Clichie? I've found a very clever little woman here in Denver — she isn't French, but she goes to Paris every year and she seems to really know. With my hair I have to be painfully careful, so in spite of the fact that I can't at all afford her. . . ."

Talk drifted. She told me something of Leadville, a great mining center, and the ranch Mr. Black owned some ten miles north of that. I asked if mines were indigenous to ranches. No—cattle. I had never known Valentine possessed of so much useful information. She told me of the work my father was doing—about the tunnel he was putting through four miles of mountain—bridging gulfs. . . .

"You like it out here —?" I said.

She liked it tremendously. She sometimes found it lonely: "Of course Denver's tremendously progressive, but when one is used to London and New York it has its limitations. I like the country better. I like the Springs—Colorado Springs—I go there sometimes and talk to the invalids, any one from the East—even if they have but half a lung—seems quite wonderful."

"Colorado's a great state, isn't it? with mines and ranches and invalids — not to say railroads!"

"And dancers," said Valentine, "and Mormons right

across the way in Utah. When Carson's tunnel is finished it will bring Utah very much nearer."

"Is that what you call him, Carson?"

"Yes. I believe Billy is what he is generally called by the people who know him best, but somehow — well, I don't know — Billy." She made a wry face.

"I agree with you perfectly." Our mutual dislike of Billy brought us close.

It was, altogether, a remarkably friendly little luncheon we had there at the Brown Palace Hotel. We couldn't have kept up the other pace and so we rested, Valentine stretching her toes in the agreeable consciousness of publicity, accepting the gaze which was unanimously turned to us, and being willing to forget for the moment everything but the pleasant amber of her sherry and the sharp tang of her caviare. I too felt at peace. It was the little things that mattered. The greater need I had ignored, and now made up for that by my careful attention to the lesser. My guest could get along without freedom if she could break bread with Rose Carson, conspicuously, at the Brown Palace. There she was, a succession of perfect lengths, the long waist, the long limbs, hung together miraculously, every curve of her and every angle gracing and complementing the next; she was all this that she had been before, and having too a glamor I suppose to be laid at the door of her great man. If love made people look like that, why, I had no fault to find with it — but the trouble was it didn't. was a peculiar instance. I pondered and felt a sort of mastery of its peculiarities. Mud if you like, but above, the sky. . . . The glare of it came in through the wide window by which we sat and fell full upon the goddess.

She was a goddess — she couldn't have been anything else — and I had the rare privilege of watching her, even the very humble one of feeding her. And this last gave me a distinct pleasure, showed I could force her down to the common level of humanity. I wasn't usually so conscious of my own hospitality; the main thing was that friends should be together, who the host and who the guest mattered little; but to-day it was particularly blessed to give, and my misfortune that the limitations of luncheon and the Brown Palace were so very marked. I could have wished to have spread my bounty in such a palace as that erected by my old friend Akbar Shah, for instance, at Fathpur, the Town of Victory. He had built it for his wives, but might he not have also used it for the entertainment of his enemies spread them feasts, served them poisoned wine in golden goblets? Or he might have let them choose their death feasted them first, with no thought of dying, and then, as feasting were old and the dawn shone pale, made them the final welcome of oblivion. . . .

I remembered Simon the evening Penny Black had come to us in obedience to his wife's command. I remembered how he had graced his exquisite board and diverted us with talk which was at the same time sufficiently instructive. Penny at any rate had seemed to learn. Rugs had been the subject of discourse, Simon leading in the academic and Penny following in the impressionistic manner. "Rugs, forsooth!" I remembered Penny — "A palace for his wives — can't you see them sitting in little rows, cross-legged like little Turks —?" I remembered his long stretch and sudden reach which had seemed to compass all he surveyed — and then —"Didn't they have Rose to dance and Valentine to play the lute —?"

The essence of my thought at last found speech. "Simon," I said.

- "Well," said Valentine, "what of him?"
- "Isn't he the one among us all who seems to have been least considered?"
- "He's the one among us all," said Valentine, "whom it never seems necessary to consider —"
- "One must, you know, to the point of remembering he exists."
- "I know it's a failing people have even the most considerable people —"
 - "Don't make puns."
 - "I'm sorry."

A new group of lunchers had entered the room and Valentine waited until they were seated before she suggested that we go — she had a thousand errands — she couldn't linger. We rose and made our way out and up. Upstairs, she turned to me with a thinly covered apprehension. "You're not thinking of going back to him, are you?"

- "Of going back to Simon —?"
- "Yes."
- "Why, what brings you to imagining that?"
- "I don't know the way you spoke."
- "It never occurred to me."

But Valentine argued against herself. "I shouldn't think, Rose, he would take you back. I shouldn't think you'd like to ask him —"

I dealt with that point, abstractly. "It wouldn't be a question of liking. But did I ever say I intended to?"

She admitted I hadn't.

"And yet," I went on, "you've asked Penny!"

"To take me back? Yes — I know — but Penny — well, Penny's different. I should be afraid of Mr. Featherly."

"Ah — I shouldn't be as much afraid of him as I am of you!" I was surprised at my own vehemence.

"Me?" said Valentine.

"You — every one of you. You and Penny and my father —"

Valentine plunged deep. "My dear — it's ourselves we're afraid of! You're afraid of yourself. . . ."

"I believe I am!"

"You've been afraid of yourself all along."

"I believe I have."

Valentine was again inconsequent. "Simon Featherly isn't afraid of anything."

I had, as she spoke, a sudden realization of how much worse it might have been. "I'm glad it isn't he who proved to be your great man."

"I don't see what matter it is to you --"

"I'm just beginning to see!"

"You mean —?"

"I mean —"

But I found myself incapable of speech. It was as if lights were breaking out all about me. It was a glare whiter than any I had ever known — out of blackness I reached it.

Valentine was arranging her hair before the mirror, refastening with little pins the net that curbed its rebellion. She paused with her hands still raised — it gave her, in the mirror, a curious expression of horror. "You mean you'd desert us?" she said.

With me speech came. "Yes, if you care to put it so."

Valentine's little pins fell from her limp hands to the carpet. "Why didn't you tell me that before?"

"I didn't know it before."

"You've just decided now — while we've been talking — to go back to your husband?"

"Now — this minute. It's the only decent thing left for me to do."

Valentine faced me. "You'd cut yourself off from your own power —"

I was deep in thought and soul before I replied, "I'm just beginning to see what that power might be."

She continued to face me — almost to accuse me. "You would never have done it without me!"

"I grant you that. It's you—the thought of you—the force of your illustrious example. . . ."

I was singularly in the mood for jest. If it were not for shocking the sensibilities of my visitor I should have liked to have laughed. I felt curiously light, as if my traces were cut from a load I had been dragging. I had felt so once before, at the beginning of my freedom; and now my freedom was at its end — and yet I felt free.

Valentine's voice broke into the quickenings of my own consciousness. "You might have thought before —"

"I tell you, I couldn't!"

"What shall I do?"

"You'll do as you can."

"And Carson?"

"He'll do as you wish him to."

"And Penny?"

"I don't care what Penny does — your own salvations, I say, work them out!"

- "You don't care what Penny does?"
- "No not one scrap."
- "You can't love him then," said his wife.
- "I can. I could love him so that every love he's ever known would be wiped into nothing."

"But instead of that you're going back to Simon Featherly—?" Valentine spoke out of her high knowledge of what love might be.

Mechanically she thrust the last hatpin through the crown of her precious Denver hat, she picked up her wrap from a neighboring chair, gathered together her gloves, her purse and parasol. She hesitated at the door, made as if to speak again, and then changed her intention.

XLIII. "I DREAM OF A RED-ROSE TREE"

I have said that nothing can ever alter what I thought of Penny Black — what I think of him, I should say, what I felt and feel for him. . . . The past has firm what the present and the future can never take away. And particularly is this so because the door is shut; everything between him and me is over and put away beyond the power of harm. For I believe that my thought of him will never have to go through any such tests as it has already faced — I don't quite see how it can — and I'm glad of that, because I hold my memories in the main precious, what I think is unmarred, my illusions are unshattered. If one can call the cool judgment I've at last arrived at by the name of illusions. . . . For it's as if my eyes had been bathed in healing clarifying waters, and I saw — thus cleared — not the man whom the world might see, not the one he himself presented for my sight; but all in him of which the world, and even he himself, was perhaps most unaware. I see the best now, I see the ideal — the ideal I had of him — that which he at times reached. And I see why it was he didn't attain it oftener, the faults that weren't somehow his faults, the mistakes which dogged him and were greater than his capabilities of defense. The end was all a mistake. . . .

It was settled, there in Denver—the breath from my deciding words still in the air — the fact of my return to hearth and home. I telegraphed Simon—"I'm coming to you,—" and had his reply—"Good"; I told my father, who was

stunned by the communication; I've already recorded my interview with Valentine, and there remained Penny yet uninformed. I prayed that he should hear it first through me, and as it happened he did; for Valentine hadn't seen him before she went back to Leadville, and fortunately hadn't considered it her province to let him know. I wrote to him, I wrote simply. sending my letter to his office in Denver. merely announcing what I had done and expressing the hope that he wouldn't think too ill of me, I wanted him to know it wasn't because I had ceased to care — my letter was as inadequate and as trite as such letters usually are. I found his reply to it awaiting me in Kansas City, my next port of call, for he hadn't attempted to see me before I had left he would hardly have had time. He wrote me one line he asked what Simon thought. In reply to that I inclosed him the two telegrams which I had had the foresight to preserve.

In St. Louis I had word from him that he was on his way to see me. I dreaded his arrival, but knew it had to be lived through; he hadn't given me the slightest clew to what his course might be.

Though I knew he wouldn't be coming from Denver to St. Louis merely to wish me Godspeed. He would plead his cause, and I — I knew I could be firm. I was prepared for sentiment, even tears, a blessing on his head and a farewell embrace. For the time, Penny's part in the situation seemed unreal to me, I don't know why; I think all the reality of which I was capable was absorbed into the great fact that I had decided to go back. Simon's turn had come, — I thought of him and the rest was veiled. One can't do full justice to too many things together. In Denver it was Penny

to whom justice had been done; my love for him and my possibilities of love had stood forth in the midst of horror—my love had suddenly become in itself one with the horror. I didn't love him any less now; but simply for the time being I was otherwise taken up.

My fancy played about the scene I should have with him, my imagination hovered; lacking reality, my theatrical instinct came to my rescue and filled the necessary breach. I set my stage. I was extravagant in the suite of rooms I took at the hotel, I wanted vistas down which I could come to meet my wooer. And even then, not satisfied with what the vistas showed, I diverted from their natural use some properties belonging to my productions, consigning to outer darkness most of the furniture of the hotel; I reveled in flowers, I behaved altogether in a manner characteristic of a dancer spoiled and coddled. The newspapers found me out and discovered in my æstheticism an eccentricity of genius. Katie — closer to moving causes — was less graceful; she called it play-acting — trumpery. But I didn't want Penny's last memories to be ugly — beauty to the end; and I could divert him by beauty from the main issueperhaps divert myself. All this preparation was a sort of whistling in the dark to show that the darkness held no fear.

As the hour for the supreme arrival drew close I deliberately and conscientiously made myself as beautiful as I knew how. Then I passed upon every gown I owned. One was too simple, one too ceremonious, another didn't sufficiently take into account the warmth of the autumn afternoon, yet another seemed to ignore the passing of summer. . . . Rather magnificent, I found myself at last, not quite as my young man was in the habit of seeing me — new elements, unreck-

oned, new memories to be traced from this day alone — the great lady about to be welcomed by her great lord, the young man unimportant in the scales with that. And yet she could be tender with him to the end, putting her arms about him and drawing him to her, whispering how she never could forget one syllable or one caress, giving him her blessing and sending him away — he kissing her dear hand before going straight out from her presence without a look back.

I had wished for vistas, down which I could come to meet my love; but they did'me no good, for my hand had barely left the first entering door — closing it behind me — when he was upon me, with a stride new to him, and took me and held me — "Dear Rose — dear, adorable Rose —"

The one thing plain was his triumphant happiness.

"Wonderful being!" he said.

And then — at my question: "It's the right thing — the best thing — the wise thing — the thing I should never have dared suggest for fear you wouldn't understand. And now you've come to it yourself!"

He was too unbelievably, surprisingly splendid. "Ah, then — you do wish me joy —?"

"Wish you joy? I'm not a conceited ass. I wish myself joy!"

I stared. For a moment I thought his sorrow had driven him mad. I soothed him. "You'll have to tell me just what it is you mean—"

But still his speech was broken: "All this mud, and you're out of it—safe. How I thank Simon Featherly! You go back to him and what does anything matter—what can anybody say? Valentine can go to the devil, your father, me—you yourself, if you like—but doesn't it refute every

scandal? The other way would have been clumsy—you were right—divorced from Featherly, divorced from Valentine, and you and I getting married. And anything else—well, even I realized the dangers—but this is so safe, so simple—it refutes every suspicion. Why, I'm so happy I should like to make every one else as happy as I am—I might even let Valentine have her way, chuck me and have her great man. And that letter you wrote me—wouldn't it be proof of anything?—I've kept it, I've showed it to Valentine, any one would be convinced. And all the time you and I together. . . . Ah—Rose—dear lady—I kiss your feet. . . ."

"Do you mean you think we'd be together — you think I haven't left you —?" If his reason was unbalanced, he yet had a certain strange logic.

"Left me? Why, you've never been with me — you're just going to be. You've set yourself free — above the law — thrown dust in the great horrible public eye —"

"The public glare," I said.

"Yes — it can glare as much as it pleases now — it won't find anything. And you and I, safe from it, can laugh."

I wanted to get it from him, definitely. "You mean that my going back to my husband will serve as cover for a liaison with you?"

"Ah — don't say that! It's not a pretty word. Call it, rather, love and the pursuit of happiness."

"But it's what you mean —?"

"Don't make me dot all my i's! You know, I don't think I've ever been happy before—not really. Your gown is the color of it—did you know?—you're like a great sapphire set in gold. These golden rugs—didn't they come

from Poupine? And the flowers — where did you get all the flowers? I don't like people sending you flowers. But you got the two little rosebushes in the windows yourself, I know — such round, clumpy, red little rosebushes. . . . What is it — the poem of Browning? — 'I dream of a redrose tree' — that's it, I want to dream, to sit here and to play with my thoughts. I want to make everything long. I've waited long enough! I thought I should be in my grave first. I thought perhaps you were considering an appointment to meet me in heaven — and then it would be my luck to die and find there wasn't any heaven." He continued to talk. . . .

I was so shaken by my own emotions, my own terror and horror, that I don't understand how it is that I now remember so much of what he said. If he had never before known happiness, I had never before known pain. I knew it then: wave on wave, big rolling seas swamping me and holding me, — all the accumulated strains of the past weeks mounting up, — mounting too high for mere flesh to bear. And then it was as though this flesh turned to steel; I felt the hardening, curiously, I felt it and I heard it — this last in the voice which must have been mine, coming from my lips and elucidating to Penny the completeness of his error.

"You misunderstand my motives," I said. "It isn't to be with you more that I've done what I've done, but to be with you less — to be with you not at all. I'm through. I'm going back to Simon to take life up with him, as his wife, just where I left it off — when was it? — six years ago; and I'm putting behind me you and everything that concerns you."

Penny chose to regard only one part of my disclosure.

"I didn't think you were taking up life with him as his grand-mother!"

And following that, he asked me — "Do you love me?" The steel I had turned to was incapable of love. All the charm of him, and the grace, and the strength had gone hard to me — it was as if his flesh also had turned to steel. At thirty-six, in spite of recent changes, he was still like a boy who had never grown up; he had gone through all the damaging experiences of manhood precociously, as a boy might; he was scarred like a person hurt in an accident — and worn. And yet his injuries weren't physical, surely. I shan't forget him as he sat before me, the golden rugs beneath his feet; he had what is in man the rarest of all virtues, a definite, decorative beauty. Crouching a little from the effect of his dashed hopes, the splendid length and freedom of his action — or posture — was barely human, surely not modern. I was almost reminded of certain aspects of Cerberus in his younger days, or — discarding the feline — how a fawn might look, brought to bay by hunters.

But whatever he was, it found me for the time cold.

"Well —?" I said.

"I suppose you want me to go."

"There's nothing else, is there?"

"I suppose I shan't see you again."

I asked him if he had any reason for wanting to see me.

He rose. "Every reason in the world. If you send for me I shall come!"

"I shan't send for you. . . ." My voice — a thing altogether separate from myself — had filled with bitterness.

He went away—I opened the door for him, and he passed out. The steel in me softened to an unreasoning anger, a

white heat of rage. It was I, now, who had lost my reason. Katie came in to find me solemnly tearing apart the little rosebushes in the windows; I worked systematically, petal by petal, and as every one yielded softly to my touch, I was incited to still further efforts of destruction.

Katie quieted me and succeeded in getting me to my room. She laid me down on the bed, and finally beneath its covers. She took command of the situation and seemed surprisingly to grasp it. The one thing I remember of the next hours was her murmuring talk, partly to me and partly to herself: "He was a wolf and ye thought he was a lamb! I knew. His lamb's wool — his sheep's coat — the round sweet face of him. . . ."

I feel that in these pages I haven't sufficiently given the quality of Katie. But now she takes her place — she has her rights — I know she got me to the theater, knowing for me the restorative of that, and afterwards continued to pack every moment full for me. I was benumbed and docile. I bled with horrors — it's only now that my wounds are healed.

For the cool judgment of which I have spoken is only latterly fulfilled. I've been through the fire and I've come out, and my memories, I say, are still precious. The blind hate which for a while was the only emotion I could summon to my thought of Penny Black is all gone — gone as absolutely as is his own delightful presence out of my life.

XLIV. EMINENCE

THERE doesn't remain much more. . . .

Simon and I have had it all out between us. There's nothing he doesn't know about me and he's so good as to say that he finds even that little enough. All winter I've been living here in Washington Square with Mrs. Cassagryer doing so at his request. Perhaps he thinks there will be more to know, or perhaps it's merely as he says — that he wishes me to come to him, not on impulse, but on due deliberation. He explains he doesn't want me on impulse. I should say he wanted me on anything, and his forcing upon me this opportunity to reconsider is the last of his eccentricities which I shall be privileged to record. But I haven't reconsidered or, rather, my reconsiderations have all been in the same direction—and I write at my desk in the big bow window for the last time; Madison Avenue yawns wide. It extends to me a kind of hungry welcome, half triumphant, half afraid; and yet — as Valentine has once said — Simon Featherly wasn't afraid of anything. I shall return to him — return and sit at the feet of my lord with a good grace, I hope, and listen, still with grace, to mighty cadences.

This last winter has been a happy one for me. I've danced and I've written, doing both rather better than heretofore. As I have already said, I've attained at last the true detachment — without which is no art complete. I've attained an eminence. Ah — but it's nothing to the new one I shall have — the study I shall arrange for myself opening out

of Simon's gallery — also the eminence of a woman come to her own!

It has taken me all these years to decide what is my own. There are many things which could be, I think; too many that's been the difficulty all along; I have had to discard too I have the true artistic sight which makes me see too deep into too many possibilities of myself; and what has saved me from myself is a curious instinct for the good — an instinct far greater and far stronger than any morality or creed. Often with my mind, merely, I've wished to do differently from the way I've done. Even at the end, out in Denver and St. Louis, with horrors clamoring at me, I wasn't blind to the way I didn't take, it lay there before me — all bright and alluring. It would have been altogether the logical way. . . . With my mind I should have liked to have tried it — with my mind I confess that I did, and realized then for the first time fully, what a remarkable aptitude I would have shown for trying it. And I realized also how I couldn't.

It might be thought that I have sacrificed other people on the altar of my own virtue. Valentine has intimated as much, and my father hasn't let it pass unnoticed. But for that my conscience has been lately cleared; most of them haven't needed my aid. I heard only the other day that Valentine had filed a complaint against her husband on the grounds of non-support and that Penny didn't intend to contest the case; it gives me the assurance that my presence isn't missed too much. It was through my father I heard; he wrote to me, stating the bare facts. He still writes to me, for though we are both disappointed in each other, we feel — as the only surviving members of the family — that we can't afford to quarrel. I wrote what I had forgotten to tell him, the fact of

my mother's visit in New York, but he already knew. I suppose I shall continue to write to him — even to see him — when he marries Valentine, and so I suppose I shall continue to see her. I imagine them visiting us in the country.

I shall live in the country some day when I'm no longer capable of dancing. I shall live out of doors, close to the earth, close — paradoxically — to the sky. I shall look out — far and far — nothing to break my sight nearer than Spain. I shall feel the first warmth of spring — the spring days and the spring nights — I shall see best of all the fall of the year. "A little house near the good lights of a village —" I remember having wished for it, though I'm afraid my house won't be very little. I was there not long ago; Simon asked me to go down — giving his word he wouldn't come — and there have been in progress extensions and elaborations since Simon built it for me as a cottage where I might go for rest. I shall still put it to its original use, for I'm not yet through with dancing, and then — little by little — I shall remain there more and more. If I grow old, I don't wish to grow old on the stage; I shall bid it farewell, my laurels fresh, my triumphs I pray I'll have the courage. Perhaps I may find what will in a measure compensate me for my loss. . . .

I should like to have sons. I think I should have in them an immortality more certain than any vaguely promised me by fame. And my sons would be strong and tall and I should teach them to ride straight. I might hope for the honor of riding with them, out into the morning. It is for their sake as well as my own that I am glad my life is so largely yet to live, with all the strength and the youth which is mine. I look forward, not back; I have faith in the future. The past—my past—is all in these pages, and on its broad founda-

tion I hope to rise. Mind has struggled and instinct has struggled, and powers for good and evil, and I suppose with me it's some sort of high instinct which has won. Mind, I've talked of all through, and yet I'm only too well aware that I haven't the psychologist's accurate ability to say just what mind is; I should not be bothering with it at all. . . .

I've said I didn't fancy mind alone, and yet regarded a clear intellectual consciousness as the ideal medium of existence. I don't know, I'm sure. As I say, I have faith in the future.

I think I'm growing to have a little of what I should call a larger sense of things. For it isn't only my own little future which I feel concerns me, but the future taken more generally; and my own past, which I've here dealt with so discursively and intimately, is after all only a part of that larger past—one little example of it which I've luckily been able to use. I've lived it, and written it up, as though I'd chalked a sum upon a blackboard. I should like to think that it proved a rule. Perhaps the future will prove more.

For to me this larger future isn't only a setting for great machines, inventions, increasing powers of civilization. As the daughter of a man who himself has his being among these, I can't quite see them as the heritage of a new age. I think, rather, of the men such things will breed — a new race, hard and reckless, valuing life little and death less, considering and proving themselves above the natural laws: men like my father — superhuman, even as he. Though I find him a creature of impulses—and his impulses were the natural balances of his calculations—I think I should find the men who will follow him to be quite without impulse, and wearily seeking out their relaxing dissipations. But my father, at worst,

is a comparatively isolated case — what would be the effect of a whole race adjusted to like immensities? Would it be in itself a race sufficiently immense to compass the strain?

Only the other Sunday night, when I was in the country, I was privileged to converse with a young man who had alighted from an aëroplane on the front lawn, and instead of being brought closer to an answer to these questions I was only baffled.

I had been sitting quietly reading, in a corner of the big living room which Simon has had built out over what used to be the south piazza. I felt very much at peace and more at home than I might, and suddenly my security was disturbed by a throb of engines past the window. Lights flickered. I looked out — the moon was shining serenely — I looked to a great shadow on the grass, like the shadow a fish makes at the bottom of a clear pool. And then with a sweep and a burr, and what seemed to me the flap of wings in a night sky, something came to earth. It disgorged an informing spirit who walked up the path and rung the doorbell. I was presently told that the gentleman begged pardon for his intrusion and asked the loan of a cover for his plane, as his engines had broken down and he couldn't get it away until the morning. The cover was procured, a tarpaulin which was own brother to the one Ted Seymour and I had once stolen from a neighbor's stable in Barrington. I myself went forth and interviewed him — an interview, I have said, singularly arid—he apologized again, thanked me, and departed. He didn't find the incident in the slightest degree unusual. I couldn't make out that his nerve was in any way shaken, his imagination if he had any — was quite untouched. His steed remained there, great and formless in the moonlight, its mysteries cov-

EMINENCE

ered, here and there a piece of framework jutting to the lawn. I saw the butler examining it circumspectly from a reasonable distance.

But nevertheless I shall be loyal to my Big Horse. . . . I shall ride out into the morning, and at last not ride back. Perhaps out straight into the sea I shall go, the lapping waters closing about me. I shall be drawn down, softly, I hope, and see for a moment the morning sunlight flicker green in the waves; I shall watch my horse swimming strongly to the land, ridden out, perhaps, — the horse of life, — and yet unridden.

[THE END]



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